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LETTERS OF

THOMAS ERSKINE

OF LINLATHEN

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FOR

DAVID DOUGLAS.

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LETTERS OF THOMAS ERSKINE OF LINLATHEN

EDITED BY

WILLIAM HANNA, D.D., LL.D.

AUTHOR OF 'MEMOIRS OF DR. CHALMERS,' ETC.

FOURTH EDITION

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PREFACE.

The late Bishop Ewing, who knew Mr. Erskine intimately, has said, "Should any one attempt to write the life of Mr. Erskine, the difficulty must ever present itself to him that what he has to depict is spirit and not matter, that he has to convey light, to represent sound—an almost insuperable difficulty. Perhaps it can only in a measure be overcome by giving his very words, his thoughts, as they came fresh from his heart, in letters, memoranda, and such like materials."[1] This is what the Editor of this volume has attempted; confining himself to the task of arranging Mr. Erskine's letters in such order, giving such information, when necessary, as to the persons addressed, and interlacing them occasionally with such illustrative narrative, that by its setting the mirror may be made to reflect, as clearly and fully as possible, the pure bright image of one who moved so lovingly and attractively among his

[1] *Present Day Papers*, Third Series, p. 11

fellow-men, who walked so closely and constantly with God.

The utmost interest attaches to the origin, progress, and development of Mr. Erskine's religious beliefs. To such as desire to trace their history I have either carefully presented or indicated the materials out of which such a history, to be faithful, must be drawn. But I have not attempted what would have involved an analysis of Mr. Erskine's mental, moral, and spiritual idiosyncrasies, as well as a consideration of those laws which the evolution of his later from his earlier ideas obeyed. Nor have I entered on the still more interesting and important topic of defining the place he held in, and estimating the influence he exerted over, the religious thought and life of his age; confining myself to the office of the Editor, and waiving that of the critic or the historian.

W. HANNA.

16 Magdala Crescent,
Edinburgh, *February* 1878.

Note.—By omitting some of the Letters, and shortening the connecting narrative, the two volumes already published are now made one.

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LETTERS OF THOMAS ERSKINE.

CHAPTER I.

Ancestry and Earlier Years.

The great-grandfather of Thomas Erskine was the Honourable Colonel John Erskine of Carnock, great-great-grandson of the distinguished Earl of Mar, the wise Regent of Scotland, and the faithful counsellor of King James VI. Driven, like his elder brother, the third Lord Cardross into exile under the reign of the last of the Stuarts, Colonel Erskine repaired to The Hague, took part in the expedition of the Prince of Orange into England, and largely contributed to the settlement of the new government in Scotland. One thing however interfered with the public recognition of his services. Imagining that he would thereby be held as approving of the constitution of the Church of England and the manner of its connection with the State, he could not be persuaded to take the oaths of allegiance and abjuration. Surprised at not finding Colonel Erskine's name in a list which he had asked his confidential advisers to present to him of friends in Scotland entitled to recognition and reward, King William inquired, and was told the reason of the omission.

"It may be so," was the King's reply, "but I know Lieutenant-Colonel Erskine to be a firmer friend to the Government than many of those who have taken that oath." Fifty years' faithful discharge of all the duties of a good and loyal subject proved that the King's judgment was correct. In the last Scottish Parliament he represented the town of Stirling; in 1707 had a seat in the United Parliament of Great Britain; and, at the general election in the following year, was chosen as member for the Stirling district of burghs. There was, however, another assembly in which he found a more congenial sphere of public usefulness. For the long period of upwards of forty years he was returned annually by the Presbytery of Dunfermline, within whose bounds his estate of Carnock lay, as one of their representatives to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; and it was one of the many tokens of the confidence which that Church reposed in him, that when, in 1735, three special Commissioners were despatched to London to urge upon the Crown and Government the rescinding of the Act of 1712, which restored the rights of Patrons, he was one of the three—the single layman—selected to take part in this important mission.

Universally respected as he was, the Black Colonel (so called from his complexion, and to distinguish him from his nephew, the White Colonel) had his own peculiarities. During the last ten years of his life[1] he was afflicted with asthma. One day, when he was suffering from an attack which put a fresh edge upon a temper naturally somewhat inclined to irritability, fires for burning kelp had been kindled under authority of the magistrates upon the beach of the Firth of Forth, which lay immediately below

[1] He died at Edinburgh on the 13th of January 1743, in the eighty-second year of his age.

his house at Culross. Imagining that the smoke aggravated his asthma, the Colonel sent down peremptory orders that the fires should be put out. They were not obeyed. Unable to walk, he at once called for his horse, drew his sword, and handed it to his grandson, a youth of fourteen, then living with him. Down through the steep street of the village they went, determined with their own hands to extinguish the fires. The magistrates were too quick and too many for them. Gathering their retainers, they surrounded the Colonel and his grandson, and took them prisoners. The falseness and awkwardness of the position revealed themselves to him in a moment. Another fire, that of his own quick passion, was at once extinguished. "This is all nonsense," he said to the magistrates; "we are all in the wrong; come along to the inn, and let us dine together and forget this folly." The invitation was as promptly accepted as it had been given, the best dinner the innkeeper could produce was supplied, and the evening spent in perfect good-humour. The youth who upon this occasion filled the somewhat ludicrous position of sword-bearer, marching before his grandfather, was no other than Dr. John Erskine, who afterwards became the eminent divine, and whose father, the Colonel's eldest son,[1] was then practising at the bar in Edinburgh.

This son in his character and life was a singular contrast to his father. Thoughtful, retiring, diffident, taking little interest in public matters, whether of Church or State, he gave himself to the study of law, and was called to the Scottish bar in 1719, in his twenty-third year. In 1737 he was appointed Professor of Scottish Law in the Uni-

[1] Colonel Erskine was four times married: first, to a daughter of Mure of Caldwell, without issue; second, to a daughter of Dundas of Kincavel, by whom he had four sons and a daughter; third, to a daughter of Stirling of Keir, without issue; and fourth, to a daughter of Stuart of Dunearn, by whom he had one son.

versity of Edinburgh; and for twenty-eight years he taught with pre-eminent ability and success, drawing around him a larger number of students than had ever previously attended such a class. In 1754 he published his *Principles of the Law of Scotland*, intended chiefly as a text-book for the use of his students. In 1765 he resigned his Professorship and retired to Cardross, an estate lying near the Lake of Menteith. He purchased this property from his cousin, the lineal representative of his ancestors, the Lords Cardross, and from which they derived the title. Here for the last three years of his life he occupied himself in perfecting *The Institutes of the Law of Scotland*, a work which for a hundred years has kept its place of eminence and authority as one of the ablest expositions in theory and practice of the Law of Scotland, and has earned for its author the well-merited title of the "Blackstone of Scottish Jurisprudence."[1]

The Professor's only child by his first wife,—a daughter of the Hon. James Melville of Balgarvie,[2] was Dr. John Erskine, of whose life and writings so full an account has been given by Sir Harry Moncreiff. For fifty years Dr. Erskine was the centre of a large religious circle—having among his correspondents Bishops Warburton and Hurd in England, Jonathan Edwards and Dr. Cotton Mather in America, and many distinguished divines of the Continent, in whose labours and their results he took so lively an interest, that in his sixtieth year he acquired the Dutch and German languages, then little known in Scotland. More, perhaps, than any other individual, he contributed to whatever progress theological literature made in Scotland during the last half of the eighteenth century. But it was chiefly

[1] John Erskine died at Cardross on the 1st of March 1768, in the seventy-third year of his age.

[2] Brother of the second Earl of Leven and third of Melville.

as a devout Christian, a devoted pastor, and a zealous ecclesiastic, that he was known. In the latter character he acted for many years as the leader of the popular or Evangelical party in the Church of Scotland. The friendly and affectionate intercourse which he through life maintained with the leader of the opposite party, Dr. Robertson the historian, tells what the spirit was in which that leadership was conducted. For twenty-three years they were associated as colleagues in the pastoral charge of the church and parish of the Greyfriars in Edinburgh. They were men of opposite principles, sentiments, and pursuits, yet they lived in unbroken harmony. Of Dr. Erskine's sermon on the death of Dr. Robertson, Dugald Stewart has said that "it would be difficult to say whether it reflected greater honour on the character of the writer or of him whom it commemorates." Sir Harry's full-length portrait of Dr. Erskine is now looked at by few—its colours are fading away; but so long as *Guy Mannering* survives, that other picture, which Sir Walter has drawn of the form and attitude and action of the aged minister in the pulpit of Greyfriars, will be hanging in the world's galleries before all eyes, and Pleydell's truthful testimony to Dr. Erskine's character and worth be listened to.

The eldest son of the author of the *Institutes* by his second marriage, with a daughter of Mr. Stirling of Keir, was James, who succeeded to the estate of Cardross, and who married a daughter of the Earl of Elgin. The second son was David, who practised as a Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh,—"allowed," says Sir Harry Moncreiff,[1] "by all competent judges, to have been one of the ablest and most honourable men whom his profession has ever produced." His success corresponded with his ability and integrity, one fruit of which was the purchase of the estate of

[1] *Life and Writings of John Erskine, D.D.*, p. 11.

Linlathen, in the neighbourhood of Dundee, possessed now by his grandson. From the family record the following abstract is taken :—

David Erskine and Ann Graham, married 29th April 1781.

John, born 22d February	1782 ;	died 3d August	1789.
William, born 1st October	1783 ;	died 30th May	1784.
Ann, born 4th September	1786 ;	died 5th May	1804.
James, born 2d November	1787 ;	died 26th August	1816.
Thomas, born 13th October	1788 ;	died 20th March	1870.
Christian, born 19th October	1789 ;	died 1st December	1866.
David, born 1st October	1791 ;	died 23d March	1867.

Accompanied by his wife and his cousin, Miss Ann Erskine of Cardross—leaving his children in charge of their grandmother at Airth—the father of this family went to Italy in search of health, and died at Naples on the 5th April 1791. On her return from laying her husband in the grave there, Mrs. Erskine resided for about a year at Airth, and it was there that her youngest daughter was born, to whom in consequence her father's name—David—was given, rather an unusual one for a female to bear. On leaving Airth, Linlathen was of course open for their residence, but Mrs. Erskine, for the children's education, preferred remaining in Edinburgh.

The first glimpse we get of Thomas is one given by himself. "I remember," he once said to the Dean of Westminster, "in 1793—I was then five years old—the immense impression produced by the death of Louis xvi. Bruce the traveller came in a snow-storm to call at the house where I was staying. Mrs. Henderson, the housekeeper, being asked who it was that had arrived—'Wha is it?' she exclaimed; 'why, wha should it be but Kinnaird, greetin' as if there werena a saunt on earth but himsel' and the King of France.'"

The place where Thomas was at this time living was Airth Castle, near to which Kinnaird House lay. Mrs. Graham of Airth was the only grandmother that he ever knew; and deep indeed must have been the impression which one in every way so remarkable made upon his childhood. He saw in her a striking variation from that type of strict Presbyterian piety which a long line of his paternal ancestry had exhibited, and of which a living and most attractive specimen had been before his eyes in that venerable uncle around whose knees from infancy he had played. Mrs. Graham of Airth, a Stirling of Ardoch, was an Episcopalian, and a Jacobite of the highest and purest type. For the Georges she never prayed. Every Sunday, at the hour when the bell of the parish church summoned her neighbours to the Presbyterian worship, she had the Episcopal Service read in her own dwelling, the windows of which looked into the churchyard. But there was no austerity either in her politics or her religion, and the spirit of a deep and gentle piety, in varying forms, appears to have spread among her daughters, of whom Mrs. David Erskine, Thomas's mother, was the eldest.

Mrs. Graham's second daughter, Mary, married John Stirling of Kippendavie and Kippenross, whose home supplied no less than thirteen cousins to Thomas Erskine; one daughter of the family, Katherine, becoming the wife of his brother James, and another, the youngest daughter, Jane,[1] his own peculiar friend. He was accustomed in after life to associate her and the Duchesse de Broglie as the two

[1] In her later life she lived much in Paris, and counted among her many friends there Ary Scheffer. In his "Christus Consolator," this eminent artist had presented in one of the figures his ideal of female beauty, and was greatly struck, on being first introduced to Miss Stirling, to find in her the almost exact embodiment of that ideal. She was introduced afterwards in many of his pictures.

most remarkable women he had ever met. The only one of this family who survived Mr. Erskine was Captain James Stirling of Glentyan; who was not only his much-loved friend through life, but was closely associated with him in his religious history and love of art. In the days of his boyhood, Thomas was often at Kippenross. One can easily imagine how warm the welcome was that greeted him—sympathy with his widowed mother giving tenderness to his uncle's and aunt's embrace; bright and happy groups of winning cousinhood gathering around him, carrying him off to sport under the shadows of Kippendavie's noble trees, or perhaps to wander to the old Cathedral of Dunblane, which lay quite near, and to tread along the good Bishop's Walk. Thirty years afterwards he writes, "I live at Albano, on the road to Rome. The whole district is beautiful to the utmost wish, and full of delicious shade from immense trees, chiefly evergreen oaks, of which there is one as large as the Kippenross tree, indeed much larger—thirty feet round at four feet from the ground."

Other and stronger links than those of its loveliness bound his heart to Kippenross. "I am at dear Kippenross," he writes to his cousin Rachel on his return from Italy in 1828. "It is a profound enjoyment to me, for its loveliness has been mixed up with many of my earliest and most enduring impressions, with many joys and many sorrows, with things of earth and things of heaven, and the sight of it recalls them all and gives a freshness to memory, and surrounds me anew with those who are dead or distant. . . . I need not speak to you about it, but there is a spell in it on my spirit beyond what I have experienced from any other spot on earth."

Our next glimpse of Thomas is in his seventh year. Ann, his eldest sister, had a spinal affection. Her mother,

hearing that there was a person in Hinckley in Leicestershire who had effected many wonderful cures of that disease, took her daughter there, and finding that in order to accomplish her purpose she would have to remain in England for some months, sent for James and Thomas. Mr. and Mrs. Hay of Dunse Castle brought the boys up to Leicestershire, taking with them a daughter of their own, whom they left at Hinckley. This daughter, Miss Hay of Kingston Grange, writes to a friend on 17th October 1876: "I lived a year in the family of Mr. Erskine's dear mother, and was treated like one of her own children. I was between seven and eight years old when I went, and Mr. Erskine six months younger, and to us that year seemed an age, and laid the foundation of a life-long friendship." Miss Hay's mother was one of an older group of cousins than those of Kippenross; the children of that uncle of Cardross and Lady Christian his wife, spoken of with so much veneration in the following letters. Their eldest daughter (Janet) married Mr. Hay of Dunse Castle, and their fourth daughter (Matilda) Mr. Graham of Gartur, a place in the neighbourhood of Stirling. Marion (Manie) and Rachel were two unmarried daughters; the latter, the "dear dear cousin Rachel," to whom so many of the letters given in this volume were addressed.

Writing from Gartur in 1825, Mr. Erskine says, "I am going to Cardross to-day; I have not been there for nearly twenty years, but I passed some part of my childhood there, and it looks beautiful and venerable to my memory. "I remember," he says twelve years later, in 1837, "the last vacation that James and I spent at Cardross with our little dog Jemmy. I had not been well, and we came out before the regular time; they were cutting the lawn for hay, and I remember my uncle and aunt walking among the hay-makers, looking so kind and so

venerable, and so much loved and so much honoured." "What are you doing?" he writes from Paris to dear cousin Rachel in 1838. "Enjoying lovely Cardross, fair and noble Cardross, with its grave square tower, and its trees, under which our fathers' fathers have played, and its beautiful extent of grass, and its seclusion, and its simple peasantry." Death had removed Mrs. Hay, and Rachel writes to him that her sister Mrs. Graham was dying at Gartur, when in 1839 he writes from Geneva to his sister: "Our three cousins have a place to themselves in my mind, quite apart from all other people; they are connected with my early remembrance of their father and mother and of Cardross, which is the purest remembrance that I have."

On returning from Hinckley to Edinburgh, Thomas and his brother were sent to the High School, then under the Rectorship of Dr. Adam. Of their course and progress there nothing is now known. Two memories of his school-boy days Thomas carried with him, vivid to the close of life—one of profound regard for, and tender sympathy with, the Rector; the other of recoil and indignation at the sufferings he had seen inflicted by one of the Masters —the Willie of "the peck o' maut"—who, as Sir Walter tells us, was "inhumanly cruel to the boys under his charge."

In 1802 the boys were sent to a school at Durham, returning from which, Thomas entered as a student in the University of Edinburgh. Of his life at College as little can now be known as of his life at school. We know more of his daily recreations than of his daily studies, it having been his practice to walk every day to and from the top of Arthur's Seat, a distance which he made a point of accomplishing always within an hour. Having attended the Law classes, and passed the necessary trials, he was admitted

a member of the Faculty of Advocates in 1810, and remained in Edinburgh for the next six years.

The years during which he attended the Parliament House formed one of the most brilliant periods in the history of the Scottish Bar. Walter Scott was then daily to be seen sitting at the table as one of the Clerks of the Court of Session, wondering eyes fixed on him, as *Waverley, Guy Mannering, The Antiquary, The Tales of My Landlord,* appeared in quick succession, the mystery of their authorship gradually unfolding itself. The *Edinburgh Review,* established a few years before, was at the height of its popularity and power: Jeffrey, Cockburn, Fullerton, with all of whom our young advocate was on terms of closest friendship, now at the height of their fame as pleaders. His brother's marriage in 1811, and residence at Linlathen, removing from his side the influence hitherto the most potent, threw Thomas Erskine in his twenty-third year into the very heart of a society as peculiarly fitted to impress as he was open to the impression. One of the effects he has himself recorded. "I was brought up from my childhood," he says in the latest of his writings, "in the belief of the supernatural and miraculous in connection with religion, especially in connection with the person and life and teaching of Jesus Christ; and like many in the present day, I came, in after life, to have misgivings as to the credibility of this wonderful history. But the patient study of the narrative and of its place in the history of the world, and the perception of a light in it which entirely satisfied my reason and conscience, finally overcame these misgivings, and forced on me the conviction of its truth."[1]

Those misgivings came to him at the time of his close association with men, few of whom made any profession

[1] *The Spiritual Order, and other Papers* (2d Edit.), pp. 82-3.

of a faith in Christianity. Other things beside patient study conspired to re-establish him in the faith of his childhood. His cousin, Patrick Stirling of Kippenross,[1] to whom he was much attached, was a few years his senior. After serving for a short time in the Peninsula as captain of the 14th Light Dragoons, he had married, the same year that Thomas Erskine was called to the Bar. When but thirty-three years of age a mortal malady fell upon him. He went to the south of England in vain. Death drew near, and he longed to see before he died, his youngest child, an only daughter, little more than a year old. Thomas Erskine willingly undertook the task of conveying her. They reached Hastings in time for the dying father's wish to be gratified, and to witness such singular manifestations of trust and peace, and lively hope on his part, as carried home to his cousin's heart a profound impression at once of the power and preciousness of Christian faith. Not only was his own faith so fixed thereby as not again to falter,—for the first time a zeal to awaken a like faith in others was kindled. A short time afterwards another dear friend was on his death-bed, to whom he ventured to speak of that faith. His doing so was so promptly and keenly resented that he was instantly turned out of the room. But the word spoken had not been in vain. His dying friend relented, sent for him, and begged him to remain with him to the last, which he did. Then followed the death of his only brother James, of typhus fever, at Broadstairs. They had been close companions from infancy till 1805, when James joined the 41st Regiment,

[1] In Dunblane Cathedral there is a marble tablet with the following inscription :—"Sacred to the memory of John Stirling of Kippendavie, and Patrick Stirling, his eldest son, who, 'with a lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible,' departed this life, A.D. 1816. Patrick at Hastings, 30th March, aged 33 : John at Kippenross, 17th June, aged 73, and are interred in one grave in the family burying-place."

with which he served in Canada till 1808. He served afterwards as captain of the 87th Regiment, in the Walcheren Expedition, and retired in 1810. In 1811 he married his cousin Katherine Stirling of Kippenross, and went to reside at Linlathen. Five happy years were spent there. During those years Thomas was often with them. Four children were born, all of whom died within four days after birth. Looking back over fifty intervening years Thomas wrote afterwards to his friend Dr. Wylie of Carluke :—

"There are few now living who knew Linlathen when *he* and she lived there; but no one who was ever privileged to see it could forget it. I think my brother was the most remarkable man I ever knew. On looking back through a long vista of years, during which I have come in contact with many remarkable, unforgetable persons, he stands out by himself, as one in whom worth of moral character, manliness, truth, and perfect regard for the rights, interests, and feelings of every human being, accomplished more in producing the sentiment of veneration (I would even say) than I have known produced by all the talents in the world, accompanied even by the average amount of moral endowment. I never knew a young man venerated except himself.[1] He was only a year older than myself, and I venerated him from my infancy; and dear Mrs. Erskine was a most fitting wife for him. That upper world must be a wonderful meeting-place—meeting in God.—Yours ever truly, T. ERSKINE."

[1] "This young man must have made a strong impression on others than his own family, for, many years after his death, General Elphinston, our Commander-in-chief in the Afghan war, on hearing Mr. Erskine's name, asked if he were brother to Captain Erskine of such-and-such a regiment, and, on being answered in the affirmative, said, 'He was the best soldier and the best man I ever knew.' I shall never forget the voice in which Mr. Erskine repeated these words."—*Contemporary Review*, May 1870.

Sir Harry Moncreiff, who must have known him well, says of James Erskine, that "he died in the prime of life, equally regretted for the good sense and affectionate manners, and for the genuine piety and purity of mind, which eminently distinguished him."[1]

It were vain now to attempt to estimate the kind and extent of that moulding power which such an elder brother must have exerted, and equally vain to estimate the depth of the impression his death must have made. The only letters connected with that event which have been preserved are the following :—

Sept. 2, 1816.

My dear Cousin,[2]—God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor His ways as our ways. May He by His Holy Spirit conform our wills unto His holy will. Katherine is wonderfully supported, but it is an awful blow. Pray for us, that this dispensation may be sanctified to us, that we may look more to Christ, that we may look wholly to Christ. Oh! there is nothing else of any consequence. We live in the midst of shadows, and we think them realities. Lord, open Thou our eyes that we may see the truth, and that we may be assured that Thy love is better than life. We hardly know yet what has happened to us,—it seems a troubled dream; but we know that it is the Lord, and that He doeth all things well. K. is quite resigned, quite peaceful. How good is God! I need not write any more. Let us pray.—Yours most affectionately,

T. Erskine.

Dundee, *Sept.* 17.

The remains of my brother are to be interred on Saturday at one o'clock. . . . I left our mourners really well, and resting on the Rock of Ages.

[1] *Life of Dr. Erskine*, p. 11.

[2] Mrs. Burnett of Kemnay, daughter of Dr. Charles Stuart of Dunearn.

Sept. 22.

YOUR letter grieved my soul. If I had such another brother to lose, I would willingly give up my earthly joy in him to cure such a sorrow as yours. But it cost more to redeem a soul. . . . I have only returned from paying the last duties to the kindest of friends and brothers merely mortal; my heart is stunned; I have lost a Christian friend, a spiritual guide. But thanks be to God, I can look to the Good Shepherd, and can trust Him for the supply of all my wants, for remission of sins, and for renewal of heart, and for faith that I may see His wise love in all His dispensations towards me. Many new duties are indeed imposed on me, and I beg the prayers of my friends for grace to discharge them to the glory of the Imposer. I have just written to my poor sister, from whom I received a letter yesterday. She is well.—Farewell,

T. ERSKINE.

The new duties imposed on him by his succession to the estate of Linlathen, induced Thomas Erskine to leave Edinburgh and bid farewell to the Bar. He did not like to do so without some expression of his own deep and ardent faith. He drew up a paper, which he thought of putting into the hands of his companions at the Bar when he parted from them. Though fully and carefully written, this paper was never used as originally intended. It lay bye unthought of, till he became so well known and so highly esteemed as a writer, that he was asked to furnish Introductory Essays to some of Chalmers and Collins' Series of Select Christian Authors. He bethought him then of the paper—headed "Salvation"—which he had drawn up some years before, and handed it to the publishers. It appeared in 1825 as an Introductory Essay to the *Letters* of the Rev. Samuel Rutherford. It merits special regard at

once from the date and the object of its composition. The reader not only will find in it the same purity, ease, and gracefulness of style, and the same felicity of illustration, by which his after writings were characterised, but that key-note of doctrinal theology struck which ran through them all. "It follows," he says, "that a restoration to spiritual health, or conformity to the Divine character, is the *ultimate object* of God in His dealings with the children of men. Whatever else God hath done with regard to men, has been subsidiary, and with a view to this; even the unspeakable work of Christ, and pardon freely offered through His cross, have been but means to a further end; and that end is, that the adopted children of the family of God might be conformed to the likeness of their elder brother,—that they might resemble Him in character, and thus enter into His joy. . . . The sole object of Christian belief is to produce the Christian character, and unless this is done nothing is done."[1]

[1] *Letters of Samuel Rutherford.* Introd. Essay, pp. xiii., xxv. This Essay, along with others, is appended to the Tenth Edition of the "Internal Evidence," Edinburgh, 1878.

CHAPTER II.

Letters to Dr. Chalmers, and publication of "Remarks on the Internal Evidence for the Truth of Revealed Religion."

THE first incident of the new life at Linlathen was the marriage there, on the 14th October 1817, of Mr. Erskine's sister Christian, to Charles, fourth son of William Stirling of Keir. Cadder House, in which the newly married couple took up their abode, lay in the immediate vicinity of Glasgow. The house of a sister to whom he was so tenderly attached was as a second home to Mr. Erskine, and his earliest visits to it brought him to the neighbourhood of Glasgow at the very time when Dr. Chalmers was at the height of his fame there as a preacher. Acquaintance quickly ripened into friendship, and it so happens that the only letters of Mr. Erskine during the years 1818 and 1819, which have been preserved, are those addressed to his new friend. It was after a first visit to Dr. Chalmers, in the autumn of 1818, that the following letters were written :—

1. TO DR. CHALMERS.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am under the government of others at present, so you must excuse the fluctuation of my plans. I am afraid that I cannot have the pleasure of seeing you again at this time. I am sorry for it, but I hope soon to

meet you here or elsewhere. I hope that I have benefited by my visit to you. Certainly I was much struck with some circumstances in your conduct, and I will tell you what these are. You have been much followed, by great and small, by learned and ignorant, and yet you listened, with the meek candour of a learner, to one whom you could not but consider as your inferior by far. If you had opened to me all mysteries and all knowledge, you could not have brought to my conscience the strong conviction of the necessity and the reality of Christianity with half the force that this deportment of yours impressed upon me. . . .

I need not say how delighted I should be were you to favour me with a visit at Linlathen. I never expect an answer to my letters from you, so anything in that way will be only an unlooked-for pleasure, as I know the scantiness of your time.—Yours, with much affection and respect, T. ERSKINE.

2. TO DR. CHALMERS.

LINLATHEN, *5th Sept.* 1818.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am much gratified with the prospect which your letter holds out to me of hearing from you occasionally. To those whose hearts are apt to get slack and cold amidst the difficulties of the narrow way, everything which acts as a stimulus is most desirable, and the sympathy of our fellow-travellers does stimulate; although I know also by experience, that there are few things which require to be connected with a sterner guard over our own hearts, because there are few things which tend more to self-deception, as we easily imagine ourselves to be in the right way while we are talking about it. . . .

It seems to me of great consequence to remember that the connection between the Christian faith and character is not arbitrary but necessary,—that it is not the con-

nection which subsists between the fir and the ship in which it is inserted as a mast, but the connection which subsists between the fir and its root before it is cut down. And this constitutes the closeness of the union which subsists between Christ and His people; His work of love received by faith becomes the principle and root of spiritual life within them. This principle is not subject to the influence or condemnation of sin, it is the immortal tie which binds the Father of spirits to all His family throughout the universe. It is sweet to think of those who, having by mercy been made partakers of this new and interminable life, have departed from this scene of death to a nearer and fuller enjoyment of the fountain of their spiritual being. They are like Him, for they see Him as He is. The veil being removed, like mirrors they reflect back His own character, and thus partake His joy.

On this day three years ago I witnessed the departure of a friend who I hope is now with the Lord. What a comfort it is to think that your father according to the flesh is a branch of the true vine![1] . . .—Yours with much regard, T. ERSKINE.

3. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, 21*st Nov.* 1818.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am afraid that you will begin to think my correspondence rather troublesome, especially if occasionally interlarded by such packages as that which has I hope already reached you by the Perth coach. It is a considerable tax upon your kindness and patience to ask you to read that paper, but yet I entertain hopes that you will do it. It contains views of divine truth which have of late very much commended themselves to my understanding—solving many apparent difficulties, and exhibiting a beauti-

[1] Dr. Chalmers's father died 26th July 1818.

ful consistency through the whole scheme. With those views also I think the internal evidence of religion is intimately connected. In this manner :—The Christian character, however much it may be despised or hated in practice, yet in theory commands the approbation even of the natural reason. Supposing it to be perfected, it is *necessarily* accompanied by perfect happiness. But then the formation of this character is opposed by the strongest and most active principles of our constitution. Pride, the passions, and the appetites, are in constant operation, and are in direct opposition to the formation of this character; and even the perception of the evil of sin, which is the first element of holiness, drives us from it by producing despair. Now the gospel presents us with a history of facts, the belief of which must by the nature of things produce this character, bringing our thoughts and wills into union with the Supreme Will, and increasing our sense of the evil of sin whilst it annihilates despair. In short, the gospel is most precisely suited to the wants and the diseases of the human soul.

My soul is diseased—I see to a demonstration that the gospel is every way calculated to remove this disease, that, if accepted, it *must* remove it. I can discover no other cure. The gospel is then the true remedy, and nothing but a refutation of what now seems to me an axiom can tear me from it. I must be shown some other remedy superior to this, or I must be shown that this is no remedy —all other argument is irrelevant. I may be told about difficulties attending the facts, but I still insist that it is true in morals; it is true in nature, it is true in the constitution of man, it is true in the character of God. "Whether he be a sinner, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I can see." And it is not only after the cure that I see this; it was the sight of this suitableness which attracted me. I saw that it was a pearl of

great price; its value was stamped upon it by Him whose image it is. It is this suitableness which converts the infidel, as well as confirms and advances the believer. . . .

I entreat your prayers for me, that my heart may be broken and contrite, deeply impressed with a sense of sin, and with the view of the freeness of Divine grace. May your Master direct and prosper your labours for others, and at the same time keep your own heart and mind in the knowledge and love of Him.—Farewell. Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

When you have done with my packet you may send it to my sister.

The package which accompanied this letter was the first draft of the "Remarks on the Internal Evidence for the Truth of Revealed Religion." It thus appears that the first use to which Mr. Erskine turned the leisure and quiet of his residence at Linlathen, was to exhibit as lucidly and impressively as he could, and for the benefit of others, that proof of the Divine origin of Christianity by which he had himself been so peculiarly and powerfully attracted, convinced, impressed. The personal interest thus attaching to the earliest of his publications is enhanced by what is told us in the latest of them:—

"When I ask myself," he says, "what reason or right I have to believe that a man who lived in Palestine 1860 years ago was the Son of God, in order to be certain that in this belief I have hold of a substance and not of a mere shadow, I must discern in the history itself a light and truth which will meet the demands both of my reason and conscience. In fact, however true the history may be, it cannot be of any moral or spiritual benefit to me until I apprehend its truth and meaning. This, and nothing less than this, is what I require, not only in this great concern,

but in all others; for the only real instruction is that which helps us to perceive the truth and meaning of things, not that which merely asserts that such and such things are true, and insists on our accepting them as such.

"It has been the chief aim of my life to possess such an apprehension of the truth of Christianity as this; and it is now forty-five years since I ventured to give through the press an utterance to this desire, and to accompany it with a sketch of the meagre progress I had then made in realising it."[1]

The "Remarks on the Internal Evidence," etc., was published in 1820, forty years before this passage was written. It met with an immediate and universal welcome —nine editions having been called for within nine succeeding years.[2] Its peculiar charms of method, style, and illustration, were new to the public. There was much in the volume to attract interest and kindle admiration, nothing that awakened any suspicion or distrust. The Edinburgh "Christian Instructor,"[3] prompt as that organ of the Evangelical party in Scotland was to detect the slightest deviation from Calvinistic theology, found nothing to find fault with, had nothing but lavish and unlimited praise to bestow. And yet many of those views which, when more fully expressed afterwards, met with so severe a condemnation, are to be found here in more than their germ. It was in his happiest manner that this new writer indicated what the kind of evidence in favour of Christianity was which he intended to unfold.

"I shall suppose that the steam-engine, and the application of it to the movement of vessels, was known in China in the days of Archimedes; and that a foolish lying

[1] *The Spiritual Order*, p. 82.

[2] It was translated into French by the Duchess de Broglie, and published at Paris in 1822 under the title, "Réflexions sur l'évidence intrinsèque de la vérité du Christianisme."

[3] See an elaborate review.

traveller had found his way from Sicily to China, and had there seen an exhibition of a steam-boat, and had been admitted to examine the mechanical apparatus of it,—and upon his return home, had, amongst many palpable fables, related the true particulars of this exhibition,—what feeling would this relation have probably excited in his audience. . . . Some of the rabble might probably give a stupid and wondering kind of credit to the whole; whilst the judicious but unscientific hearers would reject the whole. Now, supposing that the relation had come to the ears of Archimedes, and that he had sent for the man, and interrogated him; and, from his unorderly and unscientific, but accurate specification of boilers, and cylinders, and pipes, and furnaces, and wheels, had drawn out the mechanical theory of the steam-boat,—he might have told his friends, 'The traveller may be a liar; but this is a truth. I have a stronger evidence for it than his testimony, or the testimony of any man: it is a truth in the nature of things. The effect which the man has described is the legitimate and certain result of the apparatus which he has described. If he has fabricated this account, he must be a great philosopher. At all events, his narration is founded on an unquestionable general truth.' . . . We reason precisely in the same way with regard to men and their actions. . . . If an intimate and judicious friend of Julius Cæsar had retired to some distant corner of the world, before the commencement of the political career of that wonderful man, and had there received an accurate history of every circumstance of his conduct, how would he have received it? He would certainly have believed it; and not merely because he knew that Cæsar was ambitious, but also because he could discern that every step of his progress, as recorded in the history, was adapted with admirable intelligence to accomplish the object of his ambition. His belief of the

history, therefore, would rest on two considerations,—first, that the object attributed by it to Cæsar corresponded with the general principle under which he had classed the moral character of Cæsar; and, secondly, that there was evident, through the course of the history, a perfect adaptation of means to an end. He would have believed just on the same principle that compelled Archimedes to believe the history of the steam-boat.

"In all these processes of reasoning, we have examples of conviction, upon an evidence which is, most strictly speaking, internal,—an evidence altogether independent of our confidence in the veracity of the narrator of the facts. . . .

"The first faint outline of Christianity presents to us a view of God operating on the characters of men through a manifestation of his own character, in order that, by leading them to participate, in some measure, of his moral likeness, they may also in some measure participate of his happiness. . . .

"The object of this Dissertation is to analyse the component parts of the Christian scheme of doctrine, with reference to its bearings both on the character of God and on the character of man; and to demonstrate, that its facts not only present an expressive exhibition of all the moral qualities which can be conceived to reside in the Divine mind, but also contain all those objects which have a natural tendency to excite and suggest in the human mind that combination of moral feelings which has been termed moral perfection. We shall thus arrive at a conclusion with regard to the facts of revelation, analogous to that at which Archimedes arrived with regard to the narrative of the traveller,—viz., a conviction that they contain a general truth in relation to the characters both of God and of man; and that therefore the Apostles must either have witnessed them, as they assert, or they must have been the most mar-

vellous philosophers that the world ever saw. Their system is true in the nature of things, even were they proved to be impostors.

"This theory of internal evidence, though founded on analogy, is yet essentially different in almost all respects from that view of the subject which Bishop Butler has given, in his most valuable and philosophical work on the Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion. His design was to answer objections against revealed religion, arising out of the difficulties connected with many of its doctrines, by showing that precisely the same difficulties occur in natural religion and in the ordinary course of providence. This argument converts even the difficulties of revelation into evidences of its genuineness, because it employs them to establish the identity of the Author of Revelation and the Author of Nature. My object is quite different. I mean to show that there is an intelligible and necessary connection between the doctrinal facts of revelation and the character of God (as deduced from natural religion), in the same way as there is an intelligible and necessary connection between the character of a man and his most characteristic actions; and further, that the belief of these doctrinal facts has an intelligible and necessary tendency to produce the Christian character, in the same way that the belief of danger has an intelligible and necessary tendency to produce fear.

". . . The doctrine of the atonement through Jesus Christ, which is the corner-stone of Christianity, and to which all the other doctrines of revelation are subservient, has had to encounter the misapprehension of the understanding as well as the pride of the heart. . . . It has been sometimes so incautiously stated, as to give ground to cavillers for the charge that the Christian scheme represents God's attribute of justice as utterly at variance with every moral principle. The allegation has assumed a form

somewhat resembling this, 'That according to Christianity, God indeed apportions to every instance and degree of transgression its proper punishment; but that, while he rigidly exacts this punishment, he is not much concerned whether the person who pays it be the real criminal or an innocent being, provided only that it is a full equivalent; nay, that he is under a strange necessity to cancel guilt whenever this equivalent of punishment is tendered to him by whatever hand.' This perversion has arisen from the habit amongst some writers on religion of pressing too far the analogy between a crime and a pecuniary debt. It is not surprising that any one who entertains such a view of the subject should reject Christianity as a revelation of the God of holiness and goodness. But this is not the view given in the Bible."

Professor Noah Porter, of Yale College in the United States, when in Scotland in 1866, addressed a note to Mr. Erskine, from which the following is an extract:—

"DEAR SIR,—Excuse the liberty taken by an entire stranger, of whom you have never heard, and who is from a distant land. I have been in Scotland twice, once in 1853, and once about a week since. In both instances I have inquired respecting yourself and your writings, but have not been able to learn those particulars which something more than curiosity excited me to wish to know. If it had been possible I would have sought to see you, but I was prevented from so doing by circumstances which I could not control.

"I wished to say to you that your little work on the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion has been in America a work highly esteemed and of potent theological influence. My father, who has been the pastor of one flock for nearly sixty years, once said to me that that book had done more than any single book of his time to give

character to the new phase of theology in New England, which began about 1820, and in which Dr. N. W. Taylor, Dr. L. Beecher, Dr. Moses Stuart, and many others, were prominently concerned.

"This new theology pervaded the Presbyterian Church, and eventually led to its disruption into two bodies, the so-called Old and New School bodies, in 1836 or 1837. The volume still is esteemed very highly for its argument and its just discrimination between the theology of the schools and the theology of the Scriptures. Your later writings were not received with such general favour, but candid and friendly critics understood how you were led to adopt the views asserted in them, by the extreme and cast-iron rigidness of the Scotch theology."

M. Vinet, in a letter to his friend M. Leresche, of date 19th December 1823, referring to the work on the "Internal Evidence," says :—

"J'ai lu en entier, avec un plaisir bien pur, le livre d'Erskine ; je compte bien le relire. Tu as raison, la méthode y manque. Mais quelle simplicité ! quelle conviction ! quelle vraie chaleur ! quels aperçus nouveaux et intéressants ! La qualité de laïque de l'auteur a singulièrement contribué au plaisir que m'a fait ce livre ; elle lui donne même un mérite et un caractère particuliers. Si je ne haïssais par principe ces expressions : 'Je suis d'Apollos et de Céphas,' je me laisserais aller volontiers à dire : Je suis d'Erskine. Il n'enveloppe pas l'Évangile de ténèbres ; il nous fait bien sentir que si l'on ne peut concevoir le *comment* des mystères de la religion, le *pourquoi* est parfaitement accessible à notre raison, qu'il doit l'être, et qu'il n'y a point de vraie foi sans cela. L'œuvre de la rédemption est bien développée d'après ce principe ; l'opération du Saint-Esprit également bien présentée, non pas toutefois d'une manière qui puisse plaire à tout le monde, mais ce

n'est pas un défaut. En un mot, ce livre me paraît singulièrement propre à ouvrir les yeux à ces malheureux hommes du monde, qui méprisent ou repoussent l'Évangile parce qu'ils ne le connaissent point du tout. Dieu veuille que cet ouvrage produise les bons effets qu'a désirés son auteur ! . . ." [1]

[1] *Alexandre Vinet, Histoire de sa Vie et ses Ouvrages*, par E. Rambert (troisième édition ; Lausanne, 1876), tome première, p. 47.

CHAPTER III.

Letters from the Continent during the years 1822-24.

ON the 4th September 1821, Captain James Paterson[1] was married to David, youngest sister of Mr. Erskine.

Captain Paterson on his marriage not only left the army, but consented to take up his residence at Linlathen. This opened the way for Mr. Erskine carrying out a long-cherished intention of visiting and making a prolonged stay on the Continent.

In August 1822 he left London and crossed over to the Netherlands. The autumn months were given to North Germany, the mid-winter months to Geneva. The spring of 1823 was spent in Paris; summer saw him in the south of France. From Bordeaux he passed by the foot of the Pyrenees and the coast of the Mediterranean through Montauban, Toulouse, Montpellier, and Nismes, to Piedmont, and thence to Geneva, for a short second visit. Crossing the Alps in October, and lingering for a few weeks in the north of Italy, he proceeded to Rome, where he passed the winter of 1823-24. After a third and longer visit to Geneva he returned to Linlathen in the summer of 1825.

The following letters belong to this period:—

[1] Youngest son of Mr. Paterson of Castle Huntly.

4. TO DR. CHARLES STUART.[1]

HAMBURG, *2d Nov.* 1822
(*my brother's birthday*).

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your letter which I received at Berlin was most acceptable to me. I have often during my journey had you upon my mind, and would have given for an hour's conversation with you what a pilgrim through the desert would give for a draught of water. I have, however, met with many green spots through the desert; and springs and palm-trees, and many hours of pleasing and profitable conversation too, though not with you, my dear friend. I am at present very comfortably situated. My friends are Mr. Merle d'Aubigné, of whom Mr. Haldane will tell you. He is an estimable man, a faithful preacher,

[1] He was a lineal descendant of the Regent Murray, and stood at one time third in succession to the earldom. In earlier life he entered the Church of Scotland, and was presented to the parish of Cramond, near Edinburgh. Having adopted views on Church Establishments and other subjects which he considered inconsistent with his position as a clergyman of the Church of Scotland, he resigned his charge, studied medicine, and took his degree as a physician. A lover of all good men, he was a promoter of every enterprise which had for its object the diffusion of the gospel. He co-operated with Mr. James Haldane, Mr. Christopher Anderson, Dr. M'Crie, and others, in the formation of the Gaelic School Society. At the first annual meeting of that Society after Dr. Stuart's death, Dr. M'Crie, in moving that a notice of that event should be entered in the records of the Society, said, "It is well known that the first idea of a distinct Society for promoting the education of our countrymen in the Highlands and Islands originated with Dr. Stuart. . . . I had the honour and happiness of an intimate acquaintance with him during a considerable number of years,—I always found in him the honourable feelings of the gentleman, the refined and liberal thinking of the scholar, and the unaffected and humble piety of the Christian." Dr. Chalmers shared the sentiments so expressed. "I feel the utmost gratitude," he said to Dr. Stuart in 1814, "for the friendly attention and fatherly care I have ever experienced at your hands." As the relationships were closer, deeper still were Mr. Erskine's attachment and gratitude, of which the reader will find a most touching and beautiful expression in the letter dated 14th June 1826, *infra*, p. 54.

and, what is rare here, an unprejudiced and unmystical student of the Word of God. Mr. Mathews is the pastor of an Independent church here. At Berlin, I made the acquaintance of a young Professor who lectures in their University on theology, and on the books of the Old and New Testament. He loves the truth, and will, I hope, be more and more enlightened himself, and blessed in his instructions to others. Our ambassador at Berlin, who takes an interest in all these things, introduced me to him. This Professor, whose name is Tholuck, is a self-taught linguist, one of the Murrays and Leydens. I should like well to study the Oriental languages under him. My want of German is a great want, and a great stupidity moreover, which I am endeavouring now to correct as fast as I can.

5. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

DRESDEN, 7*th Dec.* 1822.

MY DEAR CHRISTIAN,—At Leipzig we went over the field of battle in which about 900,000 men were engaged in mortal contest for five days. Mr. Campé (a correspondent of Mr. Baumeister) conducted us in his carriage. He was in Leipzig at the time, and saw everything which could be seen. He saw Bonaparte both before and after the action. He says that he bore his fate with exceeding calmness; that there was not the slightest appearance of agitation on his person; and he was standing close to him as he mounted his horse to go away, four hours before the allied monarchs met in the town. To-day we visited the picture-gallery here, which is one of the richest in Europe. One of Raphael's *chefs-d'œuvre*, a Madonna, the most lovely picture I ever saw—several beautiful Titians and Annibale Carraccis and Carlo Dolces.

Oh! what a secure peace we should have were we really

resting on the gospel; but it is just taken by the by, and then it produces no fruit either of holiness or happiness. Let us set to it in earnest, my dear sister, for nothing else will last. Read that sermon of Leighton's entitled "The Believer a Hero." The text I think is, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." I used to read that sermon very often, and always with pleasure. I wish that I had the volume with me.

6. TO DR. CHALMERS.

HERRNHUT, 12*th Dec.* 1822.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have often thought of you since we parted, and of the promise which I made to you of writing, and this place has recalled both very forcibly to my recollection. We have often conversed about Moravianism, and here I am in the metropolis of Moravianism. Here I am an eye-witness of the order and tranquillity and gentleness and cleanliness of Moravianism, and I feel convinced that the mere date at the top of my page will make this letter acceptable to you. Every person you meet in the street bows, or wishes you good-morning or good-night with the air of a brother or a sister. There is a repose in every face and in every action that you see. The burial-ground, *Gottes acker* (God's acre, or field), is a most interesting spot, close by the town, which seems to give a lesson of silence and peace to the whole district. There may, however, be a mannerism in all this. It is very beautiful no doubt, but surely Christianity was never intended to interfere with the natural relations of life, and to form men into artificial communities, but rather to infuse its own character and life into those relations which already existed. Herrnhut is a Christian Lanark or Sparta—in some measure at least.

I have seen many most valuable people on the Continent. There is a great deal of cordiality in Germany, and I have been received as a brother by many of them, and they are all anxious to furnish me with further introductions. In general I find the Calvinistic points in great disrepute amongst evangelical Germans. They do not seem to understand the distinction between moral and natural necessity, and they imagine that they can distinguish between foreknowledge and predestination in God. For my own part, I do not find predestination directly in the Bible, but I could no more separate the belief of predestination from my idea of God, than I could separate the conviction of moral responsibility from my own consciousness. I do not, to be sure, see how these two things coincide, but I am prepared for my own ignorance on these points. We know things, not absolutely as they are in themselves, but relatively as they are to us and to our practical necessities. I understand both these things as they relate to me, but I don't see their relation to each other, because I don't see them as they are absolutely. Arminians have no right to attribute reprobation to Calvinists, and Calvinists have no right to attribute self-righteousness to Arminians. Both inductions may be just in metaphysics, but religion is not a piece of metaphysics.

I find the distinction of objective and subjective religion very important. Some of the Christians whom I have seen here make their religion entirely an interior thing, *i.e.* entirely *subjective*. In the Bible it is objective, *i.e.* it consists of the history of God's dealings chiefly—but objective for the purpose of producing subjective religion. The Moravians are objective—they don't talk of faith, but of the cross and the glory of Christ.

I see also the great importance of stating the facts of revelation rather than the dogmas which are educible

from these forms. This also the Moravians attend to. I desire to be a little child. I have seen many very infantine characters, not affected simplicity, but genuine unintentionalness and humility, with excellent understandings. They are not so practical as the English, but they are cleverer in thought. I have formed some friendships, which I hope will last for ever. There is a Heubner at Wittenberg, a most delightful man—he lives close by the place where Luther studied, and where the Spirit of God came mightily upon him; a Leonhardi at Dresden, with whom, however, I am obliged to speak in Latin; a Merle d'Aubigné at Hamburg, the descendant of the friend of Henry IV. of France. I need not tell you names, but I wish you knew the persons. My dear sir, I recommend myself and my friend Mr. Stirling to your prayers. Mr. S. met me at Hamburg.—Yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

I feel afraid of Baxter's Saints' Rest.[1] You could do it well. I cannot command my time at present. A letter to Geneva, *poste restante*, will be acceptable.

7. TO DR. CHARLES STUART.

PARIS, 10*th March* 1823.

MY DEAR, DEAR FRIEND,—I fear that you think me forgetful, but I have had cause. My companion has been very unwell, and this has kept me in such a state of anxiety for some months, I may say, that I have been able to do little in any way. Never a day passes in which I do not think of you; and in which I do not commend you and your concerns to the Keeper of Israel.

I am sorry to find by the appearance of the second edition of my Essay,[2] that a letter which I wrote to Mr. Innes

[1] The reference here is to the Introductory Essay to Baxter's "Saints' Rest," which he supplied for Collins' "Series of Select Christian Authors."

[2] The "Essay on Faith," the first edition of which had been published

from Hamburg has miscarried. It contained a division into sections, which is very much wanting, and many additions, and some subtractions. I shall set about it again, but it is not so fresh to me as it was then. Will you tell Mr. Waugh to remit to Mr. Ewing, for his Academy, any share of the profit of the work which falls to me, and that soon? I have met here with Mr. Noel,[1] and my dear friends the Moneys,[2] of whom I have spoken to you. Their Christian intercourse has been a great comfort to me, and I stood much in need of it. Mrs. Money is one of the most amiable Christians I have ever seen. Every look, and word, and action savours of the gospel. There is a Mr. Wilder here, of whom you may have heard. It was he who found out the Christian people in the mountains near Lyons, and who wrote the letters about them which appeared in many of the magazines. He is very useful here. Not long ago he made a very bold, and yet wise attack on the superstitions which, contrary to the feelings of the people, have been re-introduced by the Jesuits here. There was a procession of pilgrims up Calvary, a hill in the neighbourhood of Paris. This had existed before the Revolution, but had been abolished by Bonaparte, along with all useless public ceremonies. At the foot of this hill Mr. W. took his stand with 1500 tracts, which he gave to the pilgrims as they went up, and which they received with great readiness; and next day these pilgrims recommended him to give some of these little books to the Jesuit missionaries who were preaching there, for that they required them at

the preceding year. "My object in this Essay has not been to represent faith as a difficult or perplexed operation, but to withdraw the attention from the act of believing, and to fix it on the object of belief, by showing that we cannot believe any moral fact without entering into its spirit, and meaning, and importance."—P. 142.

[1] The Honourable and Rev. Gerard Noel.

[2] W. Money, Esq., was consul at Venice.

least as much as anybody else. The police came to stop his proceedings. They asked, "By what authority doest thou these things?" He answered, "By the authority of my Lord Jesus Christ," and forced a New Testament on the acceptance of the officer, who was so taken by the ready and intrepid manner of Mr. W., that he could not refuse it. He has meetings at his house every Sunday evening for prayer and reading the Scriptures.[1] I have made the acquaintance of a few French. Certainly there is a readiness in this country to receive the gospel, but the political circumstances are very unfavourable. Additional Bible Societies are prohibited. How little do the Governments of this world perceive their own interests in relation to the gospel! They know not that whoever falls on that stone shall be broken. Mr. Money tells me that Wilberforce thought the Essay on Faith very obscure. I think that its undivided state gives it that character. But if he finds it obscure, how many must there be who will find it so too!

The people of this country are much cleverer than our people, but they seem to want sense very much. The proceedings of their Chambers are quite absurd. T. E.

8. TO DR. CHARLES STUART.

PARIS, 31*st March* 1823.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—. . . You ask me on what ground

[1] Mr. Wilder writes from New York to Mr. Erskine in 1851, twenty-eight years after they had met in Paris:—"I need not say that I shall ever retain the liveliest recollection of the happy hours my family and myself have been privileged to pass in your agreeable company, nor of the edification which we have so often, with numerous Christian friends, derived from your able expositions of the Scriptures under our roof at Paris. Never shall I forget the manifestation of your friendship and courtesy towards me in coming expressly from Brussels to Paris to bid me and my family an affectionate farewell at the period of our departure for this country, nor of the delightful whole night we passed together conversing of the things which pertain to our present, future, and eternal peace."

Malan charged me with Arminianism. I maintain that guilt in man always supposed *power*—that there could be no guilt unless there existed the power of doing or abstaining. I admit that no man ever believes or obeys except by divine teaching and divine support. But I affirm that no man in the ordinary exercise of his faculties lies under any natural incapacity of believing truth, or obeying what is just and reasonable, or, if he does lie under any such natural incapacity, that it is impossible to suppose that any guilt can attach to him in consequence of unbelief or disobedience. This doctrine Malan condemns, that is to say, he condemns it in words; for I am persuaded that neither he nor any one else can differ from me in reality on this point. I love Malan; there is something most apostolical in his whole deportment, and his mode of instruction I think in general very scriptural. His ministry has been much honoured by God. Wherever he goes an impression is made. I think his fault as a theologian is that he is too fond of dialectical language. He was quite frank and most affectionate; but our conversation was not of that kind which could be very profitable to either of us, for we were arguing. My chief society here has been the Money family, who are most amiable. They grow upon my affections very much. Yesterday Mr. Noel gave us two excellent discourses on the resurrection: "If ye then be risen with Christ," etc. We had a meeting of seventy-five English in the Hotel, and a most attentive audience they were. In case there should be a demand for a new edition of the *Essay on Faith*, I wish you would send me any hints that you may think important. I admire Mr. Russell's *Letters*[1] very much. I am getting

[1] *Letters, chiefly Practical and Consolatory.* By David Russell, Minister of the Gospel, Dundee. Mr. Russell was minister of the Independent Church there. These letters had this additional interest to Mr. Erskine,

some of them translated for France and Switzerland. Farewell, my dear friend. May the blessed Spirit of peace dwell in you, and bestow on you largely the earnest of future glory.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

9. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

GENEVA, *9th September* 1823.

MY DEAR CHRISTIAN,—. . . This day had been fixed by Mr. Noel and me for an expedition to Chamouni, Mont Blanc, and the glaciers; but Mrs. Noel is very delicate, and the day was not very promising. I hope to make it out to-morrow, either with them or alone. The Jeffreys, and Cockburn, and Richardson are here. Harry[1] looked so like home, that I could scarce help thinking myself in Charlotte Square. He is much fatigued, however, and has got a little cold in crossing the Alps; but don't mention this, for it might give needless uneasiness to his wife. Jeffrey is like a game-cock;—you know that his wife is a great favourite of mine. Her father, Mr. Wilkes, was here with them, but has left them. He was much attached to our James. I never knew anybody who was acquainted with James without loving him. There was a mixture of gentleness, and melancholy, and sensitiveness, and manliness, and modesty, and intelligence, and truth in his composition, that I never saw except in himself.

You may suppose that Mr. Noel is a great comfort here

that a number of them were originally addressed, with the happiest effect, to one of his sisters.

[1] "My dear Tom,—I was much gratified by your letter. It breathed the affection which I have ever received from you, and which I can truly say I have always been delighted to return. We have been more separated throughout life, both by distance and by pursuits, than at earlier periods I thought likely. But this has never cooled my regard, nor yours. I do not think that we ever had a word of personal difference, and I am unconscious of one moment's alienation, throughout an acquaintance not far short of forty years. God bless you, my dear Tom."—*Extract of letter from Lord Cockburn to Mr. Erskine*, dated 19th October 1830.

to me. Mrs. Noel is certainly much better than she has been for years. My host and hostess, Mr. and Mme. Cramer, are two excellent kind people, who make their house quite a home to me.

This is a lovely land,—oh, most lovely! My dear sister, I hope you are finding happiness and strength in Christianity, and that you know what it is to be sensible of the presence of God. Religion seems to me to consist in that. Give my love to your husband, and to Archibald, and our friends at Keir, and Linlathen (write them, for I have not written for some time, waiting for letters), and Airth. Is the bonny Spat looking bonny? and the canal, and the Lago Kelvino,[1] and the pheasants, and what not?

10. TO HIS SISTER MRS. PATERSON.

MILAN, 10*th November* 1823.

MY DEAR ITALY,[2]—How does that northern climate suit your sunny constitution; and how does the stunted vegetation on the Tay supply the want of the luxuriant life which exults and wantons in every leaf and every flower in this fair land? I left Geneva and its much-loved contents three weeks ago. I coasted the lake, and ascended the Upper Rhone, and arrived at the Simplon in splendid weather. I slept on the top, and admired, I cannot tell you how much, the magnificence of the descent. Different small streams have chosen or found out the most convenient way of getting down the mountain, and the road is guided by those streams; but our small scale of mountain scenery can give you no idea of the tremendous chasms, and overhanging precipices, and desolate ravines, and everlasting snows; and all this mixed with sweet woodland

[1] Cadder stood on the banks of the Kelvin, which supplied this garden-lake with water.

[2] A name given to her among the family, in allusion to her sunny temperament.

scenery, which, when I passed, showed every tint that nature owns.

I have since visited the Lakes Maggiore and Como, both lovely—how lovely! You know the beauty of the foliage of the sweet chestnuts; but you cannot so easily conceive the effect of a continued grove of them of every fantastic and venerable shape, upon the side of a hill—intermediate spots clothed with vines trained on trees in the Italian mode, and the ground strewed with the leaves and fruit of the chestnut. The Maggiore is softer in its character than Como; but the magnificent range of the Alps behind perhaps gives it more variety. The Lake of Como is bounded by its two sides as by two walls, in some cases almost perpendicular. There is not even a mule road on either side! And on one side the steepness of the rocks does not admit even of a footpath the whole way, or even for a considerable way. But you see olives, and vines, and laurels, and chestnuts, etc., in overflowing and rich redundance. The gentlemen who inhabit the numerous villas on its banks keep each a boat instead of horses and carriages, which could not come there, and would be of no use if they could. Some of these villas are most superb, and belong to the first and richest nobility of the north of Italy. I saw some of Canova's finest pieces of sculpture in one of them; and I saw myrtles in blossom at the same time [*November*] in a hedge before the house! Write to Christian that, after the Lago Kelvino, I do not believe there is anything more enchanting than Como.

I am writing over anew my *Essay on Faith* for a French translation. I hope to improve it much, particularly in its arrangement.

I have been in absolute solitude for three weeks. I don't know even the name of a creature in Milan. But I am very comfortable and happy when I can keep near God;

and solitude is not adverse to that, though, and at the same time, it will not produce it. We are as much led away by our own imaginations as by those of others. The constant sense of the Divine presence is the important thing and the delightful thing, and, at the same time, wonderful to say, it is the great difficulty. . . . There are some very fine pictures here of Guercino, and Carracci, and Guido Reni, and Salvator, and one Raphael, and Leonardo da Vinci's great piece of the Supper much defaced (fresco): his colours are oil, and it appears that water-colours stand best in these frescos. The Cathedral is immense—all white marble—it is really unutterable. I go soon to Genoa, where the Noels are for the winter. I shall stay there a week or two, and then Florence. You may write to Florence. . . . Farewell. The Lord's blessing be with you all.

11. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

FLORENCE, *Feb.* 1824.

MY DEAR CHRISTIAN,—My dear sister, what a strange world it is! It seems most extraordinary to myself that I can, in the midst of such a world of death, and sin, and sorrow, find enjoyment in marble cut into certain forms, and colours laid on canvas; and yet I really find immense enjoyment in it—I feel almost as if I had gotten a new sense.

There must have been a most surpassing genius in these old Greek sculptors. It is not merely perfect beauty and perfect grace which they have drawn out from the secret treasures of nature, but they have transmitted to us their highest thoughts and their loveliest sentiments, all fresh, and living, and breathing as when they first appeared to their own inspired souls, in a form that cannot be mistaken, and infinitely more eloquent and imposing than any lan-

guage. No words can describe the Niobe, that union of all that is desolate and all that is noble—the desperation proceeding from the knowledge that her enemies were deities, and yet that heroism which never even glances at her own personal danger. The Venus is very beautiful, though I prefer the Niobe infinitely. The perfect modesty of the Venus is at least equal to her beauty; you could really scarcely imagine it possible that an unclothed figure could be so naturally and unaffectedly modest. There are many most delightful pictures too, several very fine Raphaels and Titians, which last rise daily in my judgment in spite of Sir Joshua Reynolds. I cannot sympathise with Sir Joshua either, in his admiration for Michael Angelo. . . . I have just been interrupted by a visit from a descendant of Michael Angelo, who has asked me to his house to see some of the remains of his illustrious ancestor. Cumming Bruce is here, whom I like much; and young Mure of Caldwell, a fine young man.—Yours affectionately, T. E.

12. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

ROME, 25*th February* 1824.

MY DEAR CHRISTIAN,—It is never from forgetfulness, and far less from indifference, that my letters to you are unfrequent; for there is no person in the world that I like better, or think oftener of, than yourself; but really the business of seeing sights is a full occupation of time, and a most fatiguing occupation too. . . .

This place from which I write is just a mighty monument of the uncertainty of human things—it is a home for the afflicted and ruined and disappointed; for here they will see the traces of a heavier affliction, and a deeper and more widely extended ruin, and a more unlooked-for blight than their own. Here they do not see the tombs of individuals, but of empires—they walk over the ashes of all

that this world has produced of mighty, and glorious, and enduring, of cheerful, and prosperous; and they may thus have the consolation of thinking that, when they suffer, they only share the common inheritance of man. Thank God, we have better and more solid consolation than the mere knowledge that we have the whole of our race, past and present, as our companions in sorrow. We have learned that according to the plans of Divine wisdom, sorrow is the seed of joy, and that out of the fragments of this life a higher life is to be formed. . . .

The Noels have gone this morning for Naples. They pressed me very hard to go with them, but I want to see more of this place, and to get more into its spirit. Rome is not a place to see in company with others. It is too solemn and overwhelming in its principle to admit ever of being felt by a number of people together. Ten people can admire a column or a statue together; but ten people cannot look together into the abyss of past time and glory and genius. It is like looking into a grave, or conversing with a departed spirit. I cannot tell you anything which you do not find better in books; only that the half of the truth can never be told you of the general interest of the scene, or of the magnificence of St. Peter's, or of the magic of the Apollo. . . . My dear Christian, I hope Charles is not feeling his arm troublesome; if he does, come away, and I shall be your cicerone. It would be an immense delight to me to see you, and I know that both you and Charles would delight in it. Take a lesson in Italian now and then by way of preparation. Give my best love to all friends, especially the *Laird himsel'*.—Yours affectionately, T. E.

13. TO DR. CHARLES STUART.

ROME, 19*th April* 1824.

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . This city on the seven hills

is really a wonderful place. It is full of history and prophecy—full both of the past and the future: and the religious system which has been concocted here fills up the sum of its marvels. Yesterday was Easter Day, and the way of celebrating the resurrection of our Lord which has been adopted here, is to illuminate St. Peter's from the ground to the Cross on the cupola, and to set off artificial fireworks from St. Angelo! This was the work of the evening, and in the forenoon the Pope gave his benediction from a balcony in the Quirinal, which was announced to those who were not present by the firing of cannon! My astonishment is, that the thing goes on, for all the people seem to regard it with perfect levity; they like it merely as a spectacle, and surely they could easily have the same spectacle, without the expense and load of the system to which it is attached. Assuredly there is not a place on the earth which is better fitted to be considered as the representative of human nature in all its efforts, and especially in its rebellion against Heaven; and as such it stands forth in Scripture. There we see it set up as the mark of the denunciations of God. It is the great theatre on which man has exhibited his powers, and his weakness, and his corruption; he has endeavoured to do everything without God, and the ruins of the Forum and the Palatine tell the success; he has endeavoured even to be religious without God, and that experiment I should think is drawing to its conclusion. I suppose that you have heard by this time of the measures which have been taken by the Government of the Canton de Vaud against the Momiers as they are called, *i.e.* against real religion. The common people are against it, *i.e.* serious religion in Switzerland, which is not a usual thing (although the Wesleys found the same thing, to be sure, in England), and the Government, leaning upon this feeling, has forbidden all meetings for religious pur-

poses amongst the Momiers, under severe penalties. I have a great mind to send the narrative which Empeytaz (a friend of Lady Carnegie) has written to me of the transactions to Mr. F. Gordon, in case any statement on the subject should be required. But it is not wise nor safe to raise much cry in England about these matters,—it only exasperates the Continental Governments, without effecting any change. So if I send, there must be no use of that sort made of it. . . .—Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

14. TO HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW, CAPTAIN PATERSON.

ROME, 17*th May* 1824.

MY DEAR JAMES,—I have just received the intelligence of dear Ralph's death.[1] I desire to return thanks for the mercy of God towards him, in giving him a clear sense of the necessity and the sufficiency of the great atonement. I don't think that there was one of my relations to whom I felt so much brotherliness as to Ralph; he had a noble heart and a gentle heart, and self seemed to have little to do in his composition. It is a heart-breaking blow to his family. Oh may it be blessed to them, and, if their hearts are broken, may they have new hearts given them from above! It is a purpose of love, however, we know—Ralph and Jeannie, the eldest and the youngest. The root must shake, whilst the branches fall. Mr. Dundas will feel it strongly.

I am going to Naples to-morrow: I wish to see the place where my father died. There is a poor Swiss here who is dying. I leave my servant here to look after him when I am at Naples, and if he is alive when I return, I must stay with him. He has no earthly friend here but me. I shall write to my mother at Harrogate from Naples. Give my

[1] His cousin, Ralph Dundas, eldest son of James Dundas of Ochtertyre.

love to Davie and the children, and to the Dundas family most particularly and affectionately. I wish we were all fairly grafted into the true Vine, and then, come life or come death, all would be well. Farewell, my dear brother. The sight of your hand from Paris gave me a start; it is a hand I should like well to clasp again. . . .

I intend to be back at Geneva by the end of June; but that will depend on the life of the Swiss. He is a thorough Christian.—Yours, etc., T. ERSKINE.

15. TO DR. CHARLES STUART.

ROME, 27*th June* 1824.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—. . . I am preparing to leave this capital of the world now, and to return to Geneva. This is a place for collecting the materials of future thought and feeling; and I do not think that in this respect I have altogether lost my time here. Providence has called me to be the witness of a most interesting scene lately—the death of a poor Swiss artist, a peaceful and faithful follower of Christ. His lungs had been attacked some years ago. In this situation it pleased God to make him acquainted with that truth which comforts the mourner and strengthens the faint, through the instrumentality of a very worthy man, a Mr. Perrot, whom I know. Since that time he has been sustained, and enabled to walk on in the narrow path. Last autumn, when Mr. Noel left Geneva for Italy, he was requested by Mr. Perrot to take this poor sick artist along with him, which he did as far as Florence, from whence he proceeded alone to Rome. The winter was very severe, and the health of this poor man (I should not say *poor*, for he is rich) evidently declined apace. He was without friends, without comforts, without sleep, for whenever he lay down the cough seized him, and in a country whose language was strange to him; but he was not without God,

and God was to him friends, and comfort, and rest, and home. I arrived here about the middle of February, and got acquainted with him, and saw him occasionally. He could go about and walk a little then, and he used to come and sit with Mr. Noel and me from time to time; and we always found him most edifying, as far as his extreme modesty would permit him to communicate to us his Christian experience. For long he had been in the habit of living much alone, and of speaking more to God than to man; and this high intercourse had left its traces on him — its blessed traces of holiness and peace. As the spring advanced he got worse and weaker, and in April he became unable to leave his room. I saw a great deal of him then. I was particularly struck with the exceeding seriousness of his mind. He was much afraid of thinking or speaking of religion in an unfit or unawakened state of mind, or rather, I should say, without intense feeling. His conscience went so far on this matter that he would not allow me to read to him, unless his mind could come to the stretch. He was afraid of dishonouring God by not giving Him the whole effort and exertion of his spirit. He used to tell me that his sleepless nights were delightful opportunities of communion with God. The joy which filled his heart received very little abatement from his disease. On the day before his death he told me that he had had moments that day which he could not express—"*des moments inexprimables.*" You who are in health, he said, can scarcely conceive the manifestations which God makes to His people as they stand on the brink of the grave. He has finished his course, and kept the faith, and received the crown. My dear R. D. has also, I rejoice to hear, been made a bright monument of the grace of God. Let us then be of good courage and follow the pillar of cloud and of fire, as it conducts us into the promised land. My dear friend I

long to see you again. I have many friends, but few fathers. When Mr. W. Erskine[1] from Bombay arrives, I hope that you will see him. I am sure that he must be a very amiable and a very able man.—Yours affectionately, T. E.

16. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

GENEVA, 22*d Sept.* 1824.

MY DEAR CHRISTIAN,—. . . . You were well off for weather in crossing the Simplon, and I am sure that you have enjoyed it much, and that you are satisfied that even Switzerland cannot show anything superior to it in sublimity. You were also delighted with Baveno ; I am sure you could not be otherwise. And [I am sure] that you have been struck with the appearance of rich production through Lombardy. Virgil calls Italy "the bounteous mother of men and fruits." You are at present surrounded by the purple vintage. I delight in that exuberance of nature that pours itself almost unasked over these sunny hills, and vales, and plains. I shall direct this to Florence. You must go to the Gallery about twelve, when one of the custodes, who are gentlemen, and do not receive money, commences the round of all the *camere* or chambers. The tribune, in which the chiefest specimens, both of sculpture and painting, are assembled, is generally open. There are the Venus de Medici and a beautiful Apollo. There are several Raphaels. Now, just begin and study Raphael. Remark the goodness, and the worth, and the piety of his faces, separate altogether from the fine art and execution. There are two little Madonnas, or rather Holy Families, on the left hand as you enter, in his early style, with blue landscape behind them. Observe the face of the young

[1] Sir James Mackintosh's son-in-law, author of the "History of India under the two first Sovereigns of the House of Taimur."

Saviour in one of these. The St. John in the Desert is very striking. Observe Domenichino's portrait of a Cardinal, very like Dr. Chalmers, I think, when he appears gruff, in which predicament you perhaps have never seen him. In the Pitti, hunt Raphael without remorse or shame. There are several in all his manners. Observe Ezekiel's Vision; what a colossal and imposing strength he has contrived to represent in that small compass! Madonna della Seggiola—the loveliest head I ever saw, except the one at Dresden. The St. Mark by Fra Bartolomeo: that was a great painter; attend to him. A portrait of Hippolito de' Medici, by Titian, in one of the back rooms, over the door—a splendid thing, look for it. Ask for the room where two Salvator Rosas hang. It is not usually shown, but ask. There are also beautiful Poussins there. Go to the church of Santa Croce, where the great men of Florence are buried—most interesting. Go to the Annunciata Vestibule to see the frescos of Andrea del Sarto and his scholars; he was a great painter too. Go also to the Santa Maria Novella—curious old frescos. There is an Irish padre named Padre Tomaso (Father Thomas), who likes to show the English the sights there. You may ask for him if you are curious to see the oldest frescos. Go to the chapel of the Medici. Observe the statues of that family by Michael Angelo. There is something very imposing and solemn in those two statues—very unlike the antique, but fully giving the idea of the baronial character and chivalry of the middle ages. The Church of the Medici itself is much more rich than beautiful. Admire the baptistery, especially the door towards the Cathedral. Admire also the bridge of Santa Trinità, which is most beautiful in its form. Farewell, my dear sister. In the midst of all that, keep near God. Draw nigh unto Him, and He says that He will draw nigh unto us. . . .

17. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

GENÈVE, 27*th Oct.* 1824.

MY DEARLY BELOVED CHRISTIAN,—. . . Do you find yourselves at home now in Rome? Have you got the *camere* of Raphael by heart? Have you drunk the spirit of the Apollo and the Mercury (falsely and foully degraded into Antinous), and the Laocoon? There is an eternity in all these things—a vivacious principle of beauty and of nobleness—which knows no age. And the Grand Juno, and the Minerva in the Braccio Nuovo, and Thorwaldsen's John the Baptist and his hearers, and Christ and the Apostles. But I always haver when I commence on these things, and they'll trot me at home if I don't take care of myself. There is no trotting on the Continent. I hope you go to the Vatican as often as you can, and that you expand your spirit in St. Peter's. There also, there is an eternity—and a different world from that which is without, and a different climate. And the splendid mosaics, and the tall beckoning silent figures of the saints and martyrs, and the light and the air which play so freely through it. And observe how beautifully the dome rests upon the four arches! There is a Prophet Isaiah, by Raphael, in St. Augustine. Go often to St. Andrea della Valle, and taste Domenichino, the St. John especially. I hope that you will enjoy all these things for your own sake, and for my sake in the way of companionship when you come home—*mais le déjeûner est servi.* The Cramers and Vernets inquire most kindly always after you.

Try, Christian, and connect these works of art with the religious sentiment. That seems to me the great secret of taste as well as of enjoyment. God is the source of beauty —in Him you find the spring and fountain-head. My dear sister, may He bless you, etc. T. E.

CHAPTER IV.

Letters at Home, 1825-26.

In the spring of 1825 Mr. Erskine returned to Scotland, taking up his headquarters at Linlathen, where his "mother and sister and household" were—in the summer months making a round of the cousinhood, the Dundases,[1] the Grahams, the Stirlings, etc.; in autumn exchanging visits with Dr. Chalmers, now resident at St. Andrews; giving a large part of the winter to his sister Mrs. Stirling, at Cadder; and in August 1826 leaving Linlathen again for another visit to the Continent.

The following letters were written during this period :—

[1] His mother's sister, Elizabeth, third daughter of Mr. Graham of Airth, had married James Dundas, Esq., of Ochtertyre. Throughout Mr. Erskine's life at College, and his attendance at the Parliament House, the two families lived within a few doors of each other, the Erskines in St. David Street, the Dundases in St. Andrew Square. Their intercourse was as affectionate as it was close and constant. His uncle's hospitality and his aunt's sparkling wit brought to the supper parties in St. Andrew Square many distinguished and agreeable visitors, among whom the young advocate found himself at home. With one of the younger sons of the family, George, Lord Manor, the daily intercourse of earlier years was in later life renewed, to Mr. Erskine's special gratification. One only of the large family of the Dundases now survives, Mrs. J. Stirling of Glentyan, of whom Mr. Erskine was wont to say that he could not remember the time when he did not love her.

18. TO MADAME VERNET.

4th June 1825.

My dear Friend,—Though I feel that the voice of human consolation is absolutely nothing in a grief like yours, yet I cannot but express to you how deeply I condole with you, and how earnestly I desire for you that He who alone can comfort may comfort you and your mourning family, and sanctify to you this solemn and heartrending event. "Be still and know that I am God." Within a month God has taken from you your father and your son, but it is God—the God of love, the God who so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son to die for it. Let your wounded spirit rest on this. Here is a balm for the broken heart. Take refuge in God. Abide in Him. Trust in Him and you shall not be disappointed or confounded. He who restored to life the son of the widow at Nain (Luke vii.) was standing by your son at the awful moment, and ordered every circumstance. He loved your son as He loved the son of that widow, and if it were good for him and for you, would restore him as He did the other. He loved your son, for He made him and died for him, and He says to you as He did to that mourning mother, "Weep not." Oh, what a word is that, coming from the heart of omnipotent love! Oh, may He graciously speak to you Himself, and say, "Be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid. Daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." And may He open the ears of your heart, that you may hear His voice and feel the sweetness and the power of His consolation. Trust your son with unhesitating confidence in the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ; His hands are kind and tender hands. Your affection for your son is only a faint shadow of the fatherly love of God. Leave, then, all your anxieties in regard to him with God, and

receive this event as an invitation to yourself and your family to enter into a closer communion with Him. I know that I cannot enter fully into the feelings of a mother, but I am persuaded that there is not a pang the heart can endure which may not, by the blessing of God, become the seed of holiness and happiness. Our way to the heavenly city lies through a wilderness, through a vale of tears, and our Master walked this road before us. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief whilst on earth, and now He reigns in the blessedness of God. This double inheritance He leaves to His people: "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him."

Oh, my dear friend, my heart bleeds for you, although I know that all things work together for good to those who love God. And your husband—may the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, show to his soul the unspeakable love of Christ, and turn his natural sorrow into spiritual joy. And your other children, may they all seek and find a brother in their Saviour. God's end in afflicting is to draw us to Himself and to make us partakers of His holiness (Heb. xii.), to show us the vanity and insufficiency of created things, and thus to lead us to choose Himself for our portion. Nothing can separate us from His love. Oh, precious words! Let, then, this love be the great desire and perpetual prayer of our souls. Let the language of our heart be, "Whom have we in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that we desire beside Thee."

> "Give what Thou canst; without Thee we are poor,
> And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away."

God is all. We are His. He ought to be the first and the last in our hearts. Let Him then take His great power and reign within us. This alone is peace; this alone is heaven. I beg to be remembered by you all as a

friend who is willing to weep with you, though he cannot comfort you.

19. TO MISS STUART.[1]

CADDER, 14*th June* 1826.

MY DEAR MISS STUART,—I wish to let you understand that my love and reverence for your father have not died with him, but that he still holds his place in my affection and in my gratitude. I have to bless God for my acquaintance with him. I found in him a friend, and a father, and a guide. The intercourse which I had with him was a continual incitement to me in the search after God, and I regard it as one of the talents of which I have to give in an account; and I now feel how negligent I was in the use of it. I did not know a human being on this earth on whose faithful and affectionate friendship I more confidently relied, and he is now in glory—in the second part of the inheritance. He suffered with Christ I believe here, and now I feel a joyful assurance that he reigns with Him. His soul had the mark of God upon it. The desire of his soul was after God, and his business was to understand the will and word of God. I think that it was on the Monday after he was taken ill that he said to me, as I was pressing his hand on taking leave, "*I hope to spend an eternity with you.*" Amen.

20. TO M. MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 26*th June* 1826.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you! Perhaps you think that I have been ungrateful and forgetful of the claims of friendship with regard to you, but there is not a man breathing on the earth whom I love more than you, or think of more frequently.

[1] Daughter of Dr. Charles Stuart.

Take this assurance in place of a regularly sustained epistolary correspondence. Well, how are you getting on in the pilgrimage? Oh, what I wish is, that spiritual eye, and ear, and heart, that might see, and hear, and feel God in everything—in every object of nature, in every event of time, in every duty, every difficulty, every sorrow, every joy. Enoch walked with God, and God took him. What a history of a life below, and a removal to a life above! Such a life below let us try to lead, my friend, and let us daily learn to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. I should like well to be with you for a little while; it is a pleasure to me to feel with you, and to think with you, and to know also that you have a pleasure in letting your spirit walk with mine. It is possible that I may be on the Continent soon again, and you will be one of my attracting points, but I shall let you know before, and arrange with you our times of meeting. I know not what may have been your lot since I parted with you, whether sorrowful or joyful, but I trust that it has been accompanied with a Father's blessing to your soul. As I look upon you as one of God's children, I may presume that you have had sorrow, for the promise is, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; *in Me* ye shall have peace." How sweet the promise is! How consoling to receive tribulation as the fulfilment of a Father's promise—as the private cipher agreed on between the Saviour and the saved! I have been seeing a good deal of sorrow lately, and I have myself drunk a little of that salutary cup—Ye shall drink of the cup that *I* drink of. Is it not a high privilege to partake with the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace—the friend of the friendless, my refuge, my portion? You will have felt with the poor Moneys, both in their sorrow and in their consolation with which our gracious Lord has visited their wounded hearts.

Remember me kindly to the M— family. My sister, whom you saw at Brussels, and Mr. Stirling, are in the same house with me at present, and they send you their kindest regards. You gained their affections very much, and I liked them the better for liking you so well. Farewell, my dear friend. Remember me before the throne where the answerer of prayer sits, and ask for me what you feel that you need for yourself—a heart devoted singly to God, breathing after communion with Him, and consecrating all its movements to His service. When you write to your mother, give her my affectionate regards.—Yours, in the bond which endures, T. ERSKINE.

21. TO MRS. MONTAGU.

LINLATHEN, *Thursday*, 13*th July* 1826.

MY DEAR MRS. MONTAGU,— . . . Malan has been a good deal in Scotland. I daresay he has been a good deal disappointed with many things and persons that he has seen here. Religion in Scotland is too much a thing of science, and too little a thing of personal application and interest. His reality pleases me very much; but I cannot go along with his continual demand of assurance of salvation from every person that he meets. I think that he confounds two things which are distinct—*pardon* and *salvation*. Pardon is a free gift, without respect of character in those who receive it; salvation respects the character, and is in fact only another name for sanctification; it arises from the spiritual understanding and belief of the pardon revealed to the soul by the Spirit of God. I believe that I have the first, viz., pardon, for I read that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin; but I cannot believe that I have salvation when I feel the evil heart of unbelief opposing the will of God within me.

Prayer is our business in this world—prayer for that

all-efficient Spirit, who can make, and who alone can make, all things new. I need that operation. I feel that I can do nothing.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

22. TO MISS CHRISTIAN ERSKINE.[1]

LINLATHEN, *9th August* 1826.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—I hope you don't think that I have forgotten you because I have never inquired after you since I left you. I can assure you that it is not with me, "out of sight out of mind." But my heart has been sore occupied with many things—with parting from my friends and from my duties. I sometimes question whether I am right, and that is a heavy question when the answer is not perfectly clear. I think I am right, but yet I desert a post which cannot be otherwise filled. I trust that the Good Shepherd will lead me, and make me to hear His voice, and follow it. My heart often wanders down your lane, and enters your quiet dwelling, and sits down with you, and escapes into the past and the future, the two great eternities between which the *present* stands as an agitated point. The past is with God, and the future is with God, and so also is the present, but we don't feel this so much. There is too much emotion connected with the present to allow us to see it as it really is. Eternity is to my mind just the same thing as God, and when I lose myself in eternity, I feel that I lose myself in God. That is a good way of losing ourselves, is it not? That loss is great gain. I remember you at least twice a day—in connection with eternity, and in connection with some earthly friends whom you love. I have given you Dr. Stuart's place. No, I

[1] The Rev. Dr. John Erskine had nine sons and five daughters, of whom only one son and three daughters survived him. The eldest daughter, Mary, was Mrs. Stuart of Dunearn—the youngest, Christian, was the cousin to whom this letter was addressed.

cannot say that; he shall keep his own place in my heart, though he wants not the prayers of his friends. I hope that you are getting on pretty well in spirit, and, if it be God's will, in body also. Do you hear from Rachel occasionally? She is a faithful correspondent and a faithful friend. I like to say that of her to one who knows how true it is. How is Miss Stuart? I trust that she is reaping the precious fruits of affliction, and that she drinks more of the Fountain now that her chief cistern is broken. I expect to be in town in about a week, when I hope to see you a little before I go hence, and to take another *tack of my key*, and another turn in Heriot's Green. Farewell. Believe me, with love and affection, to be yours, T. E.

23. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

Sept. 1826.

My Kitty,— . . . I saw Warwick Castle and Kenilworth, and a very beautiful country about Wellsbourne. The day that we arrived from Hinckley there was a shower of hail that broke a great deal of the glass of the neighbourhood, killed partridges and poultry, and cut cucumbers in two. William is a devoted fox-hunter. Lord Mackenzie says that a man might as well be hanged as be a fox-hunter, for he is utterly lost to the use of life. Lord M. may have a right to speak, for he is useful; but I think an idle traveller is as much lost, and might be taken up and hanged on equally good grounds. Write to me to Paris, chez Lafitte; I shall send also to Poste Restante, of course; and let me know your plans for the winter. If we lived nearer, we would be mutual helps. I hope to improve my absence at present by cultivating the opportunity of intercourse with God, uninterrupted by the creature; I desire to know what that life is which is hid with Christ in God

—to know it experimentally as my own life, to feel Christ as the fountain-head of my life, a fountain out of the reach of danger. That is the only safe life, is it not, my dear sister? Oh, let us not be half Christians; I have been that. Kitty, I hope it may please God to give you and me to know what flesh and blood cannot reveal to us. The thought of you is to me always a cheering, pleasing thought; you are a part of all my expectations of worldly happiness. Oh, may we be conducted to one of those mansions! Love to Charles; I love him. T. E.

24. TO MISS CHRISTIAN ERSKINE.

LONDON, *7th September* 1826.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—I must pay you one more little visit before I leave the country. I sleep, or more properly spend, this night on board the steam-packet for Boulogne, and then the sea will separate between me and you, and much of what is dear to me on this earth. I have been detained beyond my purposed time by different circumstances. Indeed, I expected to have been in Geneva before now; but it is always soon enough to leave one's country. London is to me at present a desert. I have hardly a friend in town. Mrs. Rich,[1] and Christy, and Maria, make up my account, with a few stragglers. I am just going to try Mrs. Oliphant. I expect to meet on the other side of the water with the Torphichens[2] and dear Katherine and Jane.[3] The Continent had something of the home feeling about it as long as they remained there, and now I have friends there—real friends—friends for eternity. But the

[1] Daughter of Sir James Mackintosh.

[2] Mr. Erskine's cousin Margaret, second daughter of John Stirling, Esq. of Kippendavie and Kippenross, married James Sandilands, tenth Lord Torphichen.

[3] His sister-in-law and cousin Mrs. James Erskine, and her sister Miss Jane Stirling.

home feeling is wanting, the charm of blood-relationships grows upon me very much. I love my kindred, and much reason have I to thank God that so many of my kindred according to the flesh belong to the family of heaven. Christy and Maria, I am glad to find, like Edinburgh, and will probably return there soon to reside. You are one of their chief points of attraction. There is something very interesting to me in their silent unexpressed affection. They are true people, but their loss is that they have never had anything either to do or to think of. They seem to be without excitement. Would you prefer having too little or too much excitability?

Hold me in your memory as I do you, near and dear. Give my kind regards to Miss Stuart, whom I often think of as her dear father's representative. When and where shall we meet again? In the Lord, and in the Lord's time. Remember me kindly to your brother and any friends. I could send friendly words to your garden, and your sun-dial, and your elder-bush, and your quiet Lane.[1]

[1] Dr. Erskine's family lived in Lauriston Lane.

CHAPTER V.

Letters from the Continent, 1826-27.

25. TO HIS SISTER MRS. PATERSON.

PARIS, 2*d October* 1826.

MY DEAR DAVIE,—Yesterday was your birthday, and it was also Sunday, and I thought much of you and yours during its services. For the first time in my life, I received the sacrament twice on one day: first, according to the Church of England, at Mr. Way's; and again in the evening, at a small reunion of French Protestants, under Mr. Olivier, one of the exiles from the Canton de Vaud. This last service was very simple and very sweet. It was between 8 and 9 o'clock at night. It was a supper; the meeting was assembled just to break bread and pray. Olivier's address was on the duty of purging out the old leaven when we keep this feast. The characteristic of all these persecuted Christians is reality, and oh, reality is everything! They have found religion to be a thing worth suffering for, they have found it a support under suffering; and they speak of it to others, not as of a logical system, but as of a new life, a heavenly strength, a very present help in trouble, and a medicine and a remedy for every evil under the sun. My dear Davie, I knew that you would be thinking of me, and thus we met together. May the Lord unite us in the bond of Christian love, and faith, and hope! . . . I read the 53d Psalm this morning, and I

thought how many fools this vain world holds. I felt my heart condemn me as one of them. . . .

I have been walking in the Tuileries with Merle, and talking with him about many things. You remember he had written to me about a proposal that he should be the tutor of the Prince of Orange's family. He has been hesitating about accepting it, from conscientious motives; for there is another governor, and he fears that he may not have full liberty in giving such religious instruction as he may think proper, in consequence of the interference and opposition of this man. As we came home, we met Mr. Lewis Way, who was coming on horseback to call on me. He was looking up at the column in the centre of the place Vendôme, and he repeated a tirade of thirty or forty blank verses on the subject, composed on the occasion; very good indeed. He told me that the colossal statue of Napoleon, which was made to stand on the top of it, was now at the foot of the Duke of Wellington's staircase. . . . Farewell. I am going to my table-d'hôte.—Yours affectionately.

Oct. 4th.—I intend to set out for Geneva to-morrow.

26. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

COPPET, 1*st November* 1826.

DEAR COUSIN RACHEL,—It is near midnight, and I set off to-morrow morning early for the Simplon. It is not therefore with the idea of writing a long letter at present that I sit down now, but with the view of beginning one, which may bear some marks of my journey from this to Venice, and which may bear testimony to you of my love for you, whether I am in England, or Switzerland, or Italy. I leave several real friends here—most interesting, affectionate, confidential friends; and there are in fact as many of them as might satisfy any moderate appetite for friendship. I certainly could not have thought it possible

for a stranger to have furnished himself with such an assortment of that article in so short a time. This house, for one, has been a home to me, and the family have been my brothers and my sister. There has been sorrow here also amongst my friends! indeed, my friends have a sort of luck for sorrow; but good-night, you shall have a little more from the Simplon.

Friday night, Brigue.—I left Coppet on Thursday morning. There are very few people in the world, at home or abroad, that I like half as well as I like Madame de Broglie, there is such a truth about her, such a superiority to everything that is little and low in character, such an activity of occupation with the thoughts and interests of eternity, such an expansion of fine and high mind dedicated to Him from whom it comes, and such a depth, and, at the same time, a *naïveté* of sentiment. And I have received from her the kindness of sisterly friendship. She, and her husband, and her brother were up to bid me adieu at 7 in the morning. . . . You have often heard me speak of Madame Vernet,[1] whom I like second best here. I wish you knew her. She has all the warmth and energy of heart that cousin Annie had—a continual spring-tide of strong and generous feeling. She always puts me in mind of the well of waters springing up unto everlasting life. I have conversed many hours with her, and I never felt her feeling flag for an instant,—it is an unfailing stream from the fountain above. Her intellect is far from being of the first order, naturally, and it has not been much cultivated; but her heart, impregnated by religion, is full of genius. I have said that I liked her second best, and yet were I permitted and required to change altogether with any other human being—character, hopes, feelings, for time and eternity—I

[1] One of the Pictet family, mother-in-law of Diodati and of the Baron de Staël.

think that I should name Madame Vernet. You will think it curious that I should make any comparison between her and cousin Annie when I tell you that she has not a single particle of merriment in her composition. She is essentially serious. You remember what Bishop Burnet says of Leighton, that he had known him twenty years, and that he had never all that time known him to say a word or do an action that he would not wish to have been the last word or action of his life. I have not known Madame Vernet twenty years, but in other respects, I could say the same thing of her. I arrived here this morning and made an attempt to get up the mountain, but there has been and is a heavy fall of snow, and I was forced back again. Sir N. and Lady Mildmay are fellow-prisoners with me here. We dined together as fellow-sufferers. Oh! it is a land of beauty this—of beauty that thrills the heart. I can weep at will whilst I look at it. There is a deep melancholy in the highest order of natural beauty, and a holiness. It seems to recall the original state of man, and to reproach him, and yet to compassionate him for having lost it. . . .

Saturday, 4th November.—Still at Brigue. The mountain is still inaccessible, but the snow has ceased to fall, and the sun has shown himself. I have been walking and wandering at this place in the midst of the Alps. I went into a churchyard, and was attracted by a lighted candle, at the end of a low long vault. I found that the candle, as usual, was standing before a crucifix; but the walls of the vault on each side were lined with human skulls, piled one above another, from the ground to the roof. It is a shocking sight. The eyeless holes have such a fixed stare, and the jaws grin so ghastly,—the palace of the soul, without its tenant. My friend Gaussen, at Geneva, holds that the spirit is in a state of total insensibility from the instant of death until the instant of the general resurrection. The

interval between death and judgment is in this way absolutely annihilated for them. Their last thought in this world will be instantaneously followed by the sound of the last trumpet. Their eye has just before death rested on the face of a friend on earth. The eye is closed, and instantaneously opened to behold the Saviour descend from heaven with clouds and great glory. If this be the case (which, however, I cannot make up my mind to entirely) when we look on the spectacle of death, it is striking to reflect that our accountable existence is passing during a period which is to the dead absolutely nothing, and that the first thought which will stir the beings to whom these trappings once belonged, and still belong perhaps, is to be a thought excited by the sight of Christ coming in power.

Sunday, 5th.—Still at Brigue. I have spent this day among the sanctities of nature—amongst glens, and green glades, and water-falls, and towering rocks, and autumnal colours, and fallen leaves, and gushing springs. There is something delightful in coming upon a fine water-fall by surprise, as it were, unconducted to it even by a footpath, so that you may almost consider yourself as the discoverer of it. Many such I saw to-day living in their own loveliness, unseen and unadmired. God made them and He pronounced them good, and the smile of His approbation seems still to dwell upon them, unpolluted and unmixed with the stupid gaze of man. The Rhone (before entering the Lake of Geneva) passes by this place, soon after issuing from the glacier; and as he hurries along, he receives supplies from the mountains which line his route. Each of these supplies forms a beautiful glen, branching off, higher up, into smaller ones, and exhibiting every variety of beauty; and then the vegetation, though vastly inferior to the south side of the mountain, is still very rich, fine sweet chestnuts and walnuts, and every kind of bush and shrub. I read

several psalms in these little sanctuaries. Forty-second psalm, "deep calleth unto deep," water-fall calleth to water-fall. His afflictions followed so hard one upon another, that they seemed to call to each other. Do you ask for a heart which pants after God, which thirsts after Him, which renounces every other dependence, which chooses Him for its portion? . . .

This day was a festival. The people are Roman Catholics, and whilst I was out on my travels, and in the very midst of all the adorations of nature, I came across a procession, consisting of the greater part of the population of this neighbourhood (as I should imagine), clergy, and laity, in cowls, and gowns, and coats of divers colours, carrying the host, and banners, and flags of every description. Sometimes they sung, and sometimes they knelt; and ever and anon there was a discharge of musketry, and then a peal of church bells. It is a woful business. Their picturesque appearance amongst these rocks and thickets is a very poor compensation to the heart for the delusion out of which such scenes proceed, and which is strengthened by them. These mummeries are so little like intercourse with the God of holy love, and that is our God and our Father. . . .

Tuesday, 7th, Simplon.—I remained Monday at Brigue, and had a delightful walk. I thought cousin Manie would have been enchanted with it, but it requires strength to have the full enjoyment of that country—muscles fit for climbing, and practised in it. The roads by which we must penetrate into its beauty and its mystery are more like chamois-paths than man-paths. The character of adventure and enterprise that belongs to these walks adds much to their interest in my estimation. If I had had paper and ability, I should have liked to have taken a sketch of a most curious scene which I came upon—a branch of

the Rhone coming out of an immense hole, that recalled to me both the crater of Vesuvius and the Coliseum. I need not attempt to describe it, but it is worth going a good way to see. And now I am on the top of the Simplon, surrounded by eternal snows. The ascent was very difficult. The road was very poorly cut through the snow, rather trodden indeed than cut; and even that barely wide enough for one carriage, so that it was a prodigious *embarras* the meeting with other carriages coming down. I don't believe that more than two feet of snow had fallen, but the road was in many places covered with avalanches to the depth of several feet. The views were very magnificent, as you may suppose. Our wheels were taken off, and we were placed on traineaux or sledges, which slide more easily along the snow, and have the advantage of not sinking. The —— are still my fellow-travellers. They are remarkably civil, but I have been accustomed to such a different style of society, that I don't find them at all satisfactory —they know nothing of God or eternity. What an extraordinary, and what an awful thing to say of any one born and educated in England, the land of Bibles—of any one born to die, and whose happiness through eternity depends entirely on the nature of his relation with God! Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest, O Lord, and causest to approach unto Thee. Grant to us that we may approach near unto Thee, that we may dwell in the secret of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Good-night, my dear, dear Rachel. May God bless you and repay your kindness to me a hundred-fold in the blessings of eternity.

8*th*, *Wednesday*.—I hail you from Italy. I am now at Baveno, on the Lago Maggiore. I have been here twice before, and I have always stopped a day or two. The scenery is enchanting, the sky without a cloud, and the moon reflected by the lake and the distant Alpine snows.

The descent from the Simplon, on the Italian side, is much more striking than on the Swiss side. The immense masses of rock, thrown together and piled one above another, give the idea of the ruins of a world. Nothing of man is to be seen, except the road on which we travel, which is, to be sure, a wonderful work. The snow lay thick till near the foot of the mountain. The road follows the course of a torrent which bursts its way through a narrow ravine, in many places scarcely wide enough to admit of the road. The precipitous rocks on each side are the very image of irresistible strength. Sometimes they rise like a wall, perpendicularly for many hundred feet, and sometimes they assume the varied shapes of ancient battlements and bartisans. As the torrent seldom runs many hundred yards perfectly straight, the road which coasts it is just a succession of glens shut in at both ends. The dashing of the torrent is the only sound which interrupts the silence of nature, if, indeed, it can be said at all to interrupt it. Well, I am on the south side of the Alps once more. As I look at them, I feel that they rise between me and my native land, and all the friends that I have in the world. Their immense forms, covered with snow, seem to forbid all intercourse; but that they cannot do, nothing but God can do that. I am perhaps at this moment thinking of the same thing with you, and is there not a perpetual spiritual intercourse between those who trust in the same Saviour, who love the same Father? Yes, the day is near when these "mountains shall depart, and these hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, who hath mercy on thee." Good-night. I saw the star of evening set to-night, and I thought of Holywell, where last I looked at it with you. Do you remember?

9th, Thursday, Baveno.—I have passed the greater part

of this day in walking about this beautiful place. The —— have gone on to Milan, with all the Brigue party except myself. One of the party was a young Bolognese officer, who had been with Bonaparte at Moscow. I admired the perfect simplicity with which he answered any questions that were put to him on the subject. It is a great deal for a man not to be a coxcomb in such circumstances. My dear cousin, do you remember how to find out the north polar star by the indication of the two stars in the Great Bear called the Pointers? I told you once, and I have just now been looking at it, and thinking of you and other friends in the north. I like to associate my friends with particular stars, there is something so sweet, and intimate, and confidential in a star. The sun and the moon, but especially the sun, are too universal and general for particular friendship; but you may consider a star as your own. The moon is shining, and the white Alps, by her pale light, look like the ghosts of past ages as they mark their wild and livid tracery upon the deep blue of heaven. I would call them "their high mightinesses," were they not so unlike the beau-ideal of a Dutchman. . . .

Baveno, 10*th*, *Friday*.—I know it must be a great bore to get pages filled with phrases about lakes, and mountains, and blue skies, especially if one's good-nature makes it a matter of conscience to read them. What a blessing it is that there are things so good and so delightful that no repetition of them can convert them into bores! Were there not some such things, eternity would be but a melancholy prospect for us. The song of heaven is called a new song, although I suppose its elements must always be the same to express its unwearying nature. The affections are always new, and, to say the truth, whatever weariness my descriptions of the aforesaid mountains may produce in you, the mountains themselves, and the blue sky into which they

push their pointed tops, and the rising sun, and the setting sun, and the shining hosts of heaven, and the lake in whose glassy surface all these reflect themselves, never tire me. Their silence, and their simplicity, and their beauty are ever new to me; there is no over-excitement in them. I went to-day to see a little lake a few miles from this—il Lago d'Orta. It is very beautiful, as everything is here. I enjoy the solitude of these expeditions very much. I am thoroughly free. As I rowed past a large chateau in a delicious situation, I had the curiosity to ask whose it was. The boatman told me, and then added, *la contessa é morta sta notte*,—the countess died this very night! Yes, the great spoiler is on the earth following the steps of sin. It is a lovely place, but death entered it last night and carried away his prey. It was a solemn night for her. How was she prepared? Did she know Him, whom to know is everlasting life? "He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die." This is just the reality after which Poussin painted his Arcadian tomb (of which I have sent you the engraving by Catherine). My heart often returns to the Ochil hills, and your grand western boundary lighted up by the setting sun, and the view from the Castle, and the Links, and the Meadows, and the Pentlands from Heriot's Green. And oh! how memory delights to revive the various feelings of earthly or heavenly origin which have been associated with these sweet scenes! But the night is coming, on which some one will say of us what the boatman said of the countess, "he—she died last night." My dear friends, may our God grant unto us that we may find mercy of the Lord on that day!

Como, Sunday, 12*th*.—I came here yesterday. Though the mountain boundary is fine through the whole of this Alpine country, yet there are points and stretches superior to the

rest, and certainly I saw one of the finest yesterday in passing by Varese, between the Lago Maggiore and the Lake of Como. "Thy faithfulness standeth like the great mountains." I should like to think that you are at Mrs. Greig's to-day, and hearing (as I did once there), "In me ye shall have peace;" but wherever you are, I hope that your spirit may be touched from on high, and that your soul may be fed by words from the mouth of God.

Venice, 2d January 1827.—It is a real pleasure to me to write to you. . . . —— is dead. Oh! do you not feel how true that word is, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." I don't know what the state of his mind was, but I have a hope (which I would not willingly think contrary to the revelation of mercy) of the ultimate salvation of all.[1] I trust that He who came to bruise the serpent's head will not cease His work of compassion until He has expelled the fatal poison from every individual of our race. I humbly think that the promise bears this wide interpretation. You think not, I know. Well, the Judge of all the earth will do right. The Lord reigneth. —— has entered the invisible world. Oh that the living could realise the estimate which the dead form of things—things temporal and things eternal. My mother has given me the particulars of ——'s last days. We know not what the Spirit of the Creator says to the spirit of the creature at that awful time. I hope for the departed (I hope in that unmeasured love which gave the Saviour; in fact, my soul refuses to believe in final ruin when it contemplates the blood of Christ), and I rejoice for the weeping friends that the last scene had so much of peace and promise in it. I have been reading over your letters again, and I cannot express to you what I feel for your affection. May God's

[1] One of the earliest expressions of a hope which he had cherished for some years.

love dwell in your heart and give you peace eternal. . . . When I pray for my friends, I always pray that their prayers for me may be heard. . . . What is the honest language of your heart? not of the conscience, but of the heart. I know no book of man's composition that goes more to the quick than Adam's *Private Thoughts.* He received the testimony of the Bible concerning the depravity and deceitfulness of his own heart, and he took part with God against himself. That is what I should like to do truly and decidedly, to take part with God against myself. . . .

4th January.—I like to put several days into my letters to you, that you may better understand how often and how dearly I think of you. I hope my friends are all well. I had a heavy, superstitious apprehension darkening my mind yesterday. All things are in my Father's hand. Oh for a right childlike dependence on His love! I have been picture-hunting to-day. Almost all the good pictures which were in the hands of individuals are sold out of Venice. And at this very time there is a negotiation going forward for the sale of the Barberigo collection, the last good collection of genuine Titians. I saw to-day the son of the last Doge, the same who abdicated passively, and thus basely terminated a high career of fourteen centuries. I don't like the character of the old Venetian state. It was a dark, bloody, selfish aristocracy. It was a government of spies and informers. It had neither virtue nor generosity. It had not even the chivalry that belonged to almost all other aristocracies. The Doge was nothing, and the people were nothing, the council of *ten* was all in all. They were the state inquisitors, they spied upon the Doge, they spied upon the people, they had their midnight examinations and consultations, they had the *bocca di Leone,* the lion's mouth, for receiving calumnies, and suspicions, and lies of every sort, and woe to those who

fell under their jealousy! The torture was always ready to force confession from weakness, and agony from the brave. And then there was the Bridge of Sighs, and the deep dungeons, unvisited by a single ray from heaven, under the level of the canals. I am not sorry that they are gone; but were I a Venetian, I should prefer a native despotism to a stranger's. Happy those who are citizens of that city which has no need of the sun, nor of the moon, for the Lord God and the Lamb are the light thereof. All human governments must be bad, more or less, until men cease to be bad. But you know that I am a lover of liberty in its largest meaning.

January 5.—There are many fine pictures in the public buildings and churches. There are four or five magnificent Titians, and a splendid Paul Veronese in the Pisani Palace, in which the portraits of the family of the Pisani are introduced in the characters of Darius's family presented to Alexander the Great. But to my mind the Venetian school is generally uninteresting, in consequence of the want of ideality and delicacy; they are too like nature in its coarseness. I can forgive an aberration from nature when the wanderer strays into a higher country and a purer atmosphere. The expression of Domenichino's St. Cecilia at Cadder is more a feeling in my heart at this moment, than all the magic of this school of colourists. Titian has mind too, undoubtedly immense mind, but not a beautiful or poetical mind.

January 6 (1827).—This is the Epiphany, you know, or the feast of the three kings, who have been substituted by the Catholics in the place of the Magi or wise men from the East, who brought gifts to the new-born Saviour. They were conducted by a star. He himself calls himself the bright and the morning star. I love the stars. I wish they conducted me to Christ. Sometimes they do. Oh

where is that eternal fountain of light from which their lovely lamps are filled! Even as the heart panteth after the water-brooks, so would my soul pant after that Fountain of life, and light, and joy. I saw one of their ceremonies in St. Mark's, and heard some of their music. The church itself is most imposing with its many arches and its gilded mosaics, representing all the saints, and martyrs, and hermits that ever lived; but their ceremonies are disgusting to common sense, and their music is not to my taste. The patriarch is a very good sort of man. I have dined with him twice. There is a kindness in his manner which is very attractive. He is most unbigoted, and I have caught myself often speaking to him about the foolish idolatries of his Church, as if he had been a Protestant. He answered me to such observations by saying that it was more difficult to build up than to pull down, and that, in the present state of ignorance in Italy, the discontinuance of these ceremonies would probably lead to entire irreligion amongst the people,—that he did what he could towards erecting schools and extending the advantage of education. He is reported to be the natural brother of the Emperor. He certainly has considerable influence, which he uses humbly and beneficently. He is going away to another archbishopric in Hungary, much to the regret of the people of Venice. He comes to Mr. Money's occasionally, and seems to enjoy the quiet domestic society that he finds there. . . . I have bought two or three pictures here, but no great things. I am quite nauseated, in fact, with the Venetian school at present. . . .

This is indeed a very remarkable place, the narrowest wynd leading from the High Street to the Cowgate is much broader than the generality of the streets here. In some of them two persons have difficulty in passing, and then they don't run straight, so that it is extremely difficult to

know the way. When the inhabitants of the better class go from one place to another, they generally go in gondolas, so that they have no occasion to get acquainted with the streets (or *calli* as they are called), and hence, in fact, many persons who have lived all their lives in Venice are as little acquainted with it as you are, with the exception of the Piazza di San Marco, the Ponte di Rialto, and the Riva leading to the public garden. They go to bed about three in the morning or so, and get up pretty early too; but they sleep a little during the day, and in truth their life is a long sleep, or at least a dream. They have nothing to do but to pass the time, which they do by drinking coffee a dozen of times in the day, by attending the theatres, walking on the Piazza or Piazzetta, and evening parties. Good-night, my dear, dear friend.

January 9.—I have heard lately from my friends in Switzerland, from Coppet, and from Carra, the Vernets' place. The Baron de Staël is just about to be married to a daughter of Madame Vernet. The friends on both sides are much pleased. I am a friend of both sides, and I am much satisfied (forsooth). She is an amiable, well-minded, and well-hearted girl. She is pious, and I really believe that that is the reason of their marriage. I used to think that he would have liked to form some high political connection by his marriage, and I regard this fact as an evidence, and a tolerably strong evidence, that he has chosen for himself a portion which is not temporal. Dear Madame Vernet is well pleased, and Madame de Broglie is delighted. I like that absolute freedom from ambition that I see in these people. I have got a portrait of the blind old Dandolo, the Venetian Doge, who at the age of eighty scaled the walls of Constantinople, or at least was the first to disembark for the attack of that place, painted in 1500 or so, by the brother of Titian's master, taken from an older por-

trait. You don't care for that. Well, my heart is with you. May the God of peace be with you! Write to Rome. I go in two days.

27. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

BOLOGNA, *Feb.* 1827.

MY DEAREST KITTY,—. . . When I was at Venice I bought many things out of sheer idleness—some not much worth, but there are two portraits in my gallery which are rarities. They are by Gentil Bellini, but their interest does not arise from that circumstance; one is the portrait of old Dandolo, the eighty-year-old Doge who took Constantinople: this portrait was painted in 1480, copied from another, probably the original. Dandolo lived about 1220. This portrait has been in the Dandolo family till lately, and I have got their attestation of its genuineness. The other portrait is still more curious; its history is this. Soon after Mahomet the Great had taken Constantinople, he took a fancy to have a picture of himself, and as he knew that his allies, the Venetians, had skilful painters, he desired that one might be sent who could do him justice. The Venetian ambassador at Constantinople then was a patrician of the family of Zen; he was the patron of Gentil Bellini, and in return for this good office Bellini gave Zen a present of the original draught which he made of the Sultan, and from which he afterwards copied the portrait which remained in Constantinople. The Zen family, like almost all the other Venetian families, is at present in great poverty, and I bought from them this most curious and living painting for sixty base sequins. It is very thin and sketchy, but life itself—and such grand life. I have been at Bologna for some days, and have been enjoying the Academy very much; these Domenichinos, especially the Martyrdom of Sta. Agnese, are the

works of a fine heart and a high genius. I would not give the Sta. Agnese for the two best Correggios in Parma, though I know that I am speaking treason against the established authorities in the kingdom of the fine arts. The lights of Correggio are indeed wonderful, but Domenichino seems to me to speak a fuller language to the heart. Correggio is too fondling, I think. After I had been here three or four days, my *domestico di piazza* took me to see a Sta. Cecilia. When I came out I told him that a friend of mine, about eighteen months ago, had bought what I was sure was the original of this picture; he immediately asked me, with great keenness, if it was not Signor Carlo Stirling that I meant. I told him yes, when he informed me that he had also been your cicerone. I said to him that I had often heard you speak of him with great approbation. He spoke of you most warmly, always calling Charles Signor Carlo, whose rapid manner of settling with the picture-dealers he could not sufficiently admire—*era furiosa*, he repeated. I have been endeavouring to do a little myself here; I have been probing for a very fine Titian; I don't think I shall get it; the man asks 1200 louis, and I have offered 1200 scudi, according to that good lesson which you gave me, and which I wish that I had always followed. Whilst this great negotiation is going on, I have been lying on my oars—till this day, when I could not resist making a little purchase, which is now perched on a chair before me, or rather, I should say, two purchases, a very fine sketch, which I hope is *originalissimo*, of Ludovico Carracci, for his great picture of the Transfiguration, in the gallery, and a beautiful abbozzo of Paolo, with a sky and architecture worth thrice what I paid for it. Venice is not so good a place for buying pictures as Bologna. I think that I rather threw away my money there upon Barbini. Do you know, my dear Kitty,

just two or three days before I left Venice the thin Barbini died suddenly from the rupture of a blood-vessel—carried away from the pictures, and shows, and shadows of things, to look on the great realities. I find that the solitude and tranquillity of my evenings are very necessary to repair the distractions of the day. I hope that you and dear Signor Carlo have quiet wherever you are, and that you are advancing in the race set before us. . . . I have an acquaintance here, a Marchese di Grudotti, who is a handsome gay young man, very fond of England; he wonders why I don't take advantage of his acquaintance to get into society here. I told him that my business was to keep quiet. He was with Bonaparte at Moscow. I met him crossing the Simplon, when he gave me his address, and requested me to call on him when I came to Bologna. He took me to the public library, and introduced me to Mezzofanti, the great linguist, who was very conversible and modest, with all his fame; I shall see more of him, I hope.

28. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

ROME, 13*th March* 1827.

MY DEAR COUSIN,— . . . I have been here a month nearly. Rome is a home to me, so vast, so desolate, so beautiful, so full of the past and the future, and so cut off from the present. It is an image of eternity. . . . I live next door to my old residence, on the Monte Pincio, which commands a view of the whole city, *i.e.* the modern city, for the situation of the ancient city is different, 180 steps of stairs above the level of the ordinary habitations. This is a tolerable security for solitude. My visiting friends would need to be strong in body and willing in mind. My occupations here are quite different from what they were when I was here last. I go rarely to see any of the galleries. I remain a good deal in the house, where I read

and write; and when I go out it is on horseback, which enables me to traverse the wilderness of the ancient city without fatigue or consumption of time. Oh! it is a place full of instruction and inspiration. The handwriting which Belshazzar saw is to be seen here on many a wall, and ruined arch, and broken column. Man was here taken in all his pride and all his glory, and weighed in the balance, and found wanting; and this mighty queen of cities is now the sepulchre of past fame. I went the other day to the burying-ground of the Protestants to see Mrs. Erskine's tomb. There her body lies, beside that of Miss Bathurst, who was drowned whilst I was here. I had often spoken to Mrs. Erskine about her (Miss B.'s) death, so suddenly torn from the society of time, and hurried into the society of eternity in a moment, without the slightest previous warning. Mrs. E. was extremely kind to me, and she liked to hear of heavenly things. The monument and the inscription are very proper. Not far from her is the body of my poor Swiss friend, Baillod. My dear friend, every hour is bringing on that solemn conclusion, when the mighty angel, with one foot on the land and one on the sea, shall swear by Him who liveth for ever, that time shall be no longer. I know not what bodies may yet be buried here, but I know that the dead who die in the Lord are blessed—blessed not for a day, but for eternity—pronounced blessed not by the weak and ignorant voice of man, but by Him who cannot lie. Oh! how blessed! I was struck this morning by a passage in Adam's *Private Thoughts.* He says, "I never look upon a dead corpse, and yet my soul perhaps must one day behold my own. What an awful moment! how happy will be the sight, if soul and body have lived together for eternity! how dreadful if they have not! and what a call is there in this thought to make sure of rejoicing then!"

I left Venice about the middle of January, in weather as wintry as Scotland could have furnished, bitter frost and deep snow. I went by Parma to Bologna. At Parma they have got the finest work of Correggio. It is a Holy Family, with St. Jerome standing beside them. There is something very absurd in that entire disregard of dates, of which all these great painters were guilty. St. Jerome lived, I believe, in the fourth century, but there he is with his lion, which is his symbol as well as St. Mark's. So far for its nonsense, but it might have been ten times as much nonsense with perfect impunity, for there is a loveliness in it which enchants and subdues. Mary Magdalene, who, according to the established custom of those gentlemen, almost always makes a part of the holy family, is kissing the foot of the infant Saviour with an expression of holy and gentle love unutterable. . . . I have been reading Doddridge. I am much struck with the deep seriousness of his expostulations and entreaties. I have never read him through before. I believe that there are few books of modern times that have been so signally blessed to the conviction and conversion of sinners. It was composed by a praying man, and his prayer has been answered ever since. . . .

God seems in this world to bring things out of their opposites—life out of death, joy out of sorrow, holiness out of pollution, glory out of shame. The cross is the King's highway to His kingdom. He went Himself that way, and amidst all the darkness of nature, the light of His countenance still shines on that way, and on those who walk there. . . .

29. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

ROME, *5th April* 1827.

MY DEAREST COUSIN RACHEL,—So Lady Oswald has

been called away from her important post, to give an account of her stewardship. I never saw her, but from what I have heard of her, I cannot but consider her removal as a most solemn and dark dispensation. The mother of a young and numerous family, a supporter of the name and character of Christianity, a wife, a friend,—a friend too of some who have few friends to lose. Well, the Lord hath done it, and He doeth all things well. He does not need instruments in His work, and sometimes He seems to intend to make His own fatherly love, and care, and power more manifest and more felt by removing intermediate instruments. When the disciples heard that their Lord was about to leave them, they gave themselves up for lost, but He told them that it was for their advantage that he should go away, as otherwise the Comforter would not come unto them. Even so now God can make darkness light before these mourners, and crooked things straight. He may speak through this event to the widowed husband's heart, and He may draw the eyes of the orphans to himself. He took little children in his arms and blessed them when he was upon earth, and he changeth not. He yet takes them in his arms. May it please Him to do so now, and to attract every friend she had to himself, to fill the void in their affections. The Bruces will feel this deeply.

I have just returned from a funeral. I think I mentioned to you a young Irish clergyman who had come abroad for his health; but the disease was beyond the reach of climate. He continued to sink during the whole winter. When I came to Rome, Dr. Peebles introduced me to his room. I feel it always a great privilege to be with the dying, and I have enjoyed this privilege. I have conversed with him upon the things of God, and the riches of divine grace treasured up in the Saviour. I have heard him express his hope in that love which brought that Saviour from

heaven to save us, and he has now, I trust, entered into peace. He had a narrow range of ideas, and had no imagination to assist or mislead his religious feelings. His spirit had never strained itself to apprehend the things of infinity, but he was conscientious and faithful to his light, and he never shook. He saw death approaching with the most perfect calmness, and he retained his self-possession to the very last moment. I don't believe that the thought of death ever quickened his pulse a single beat. Death lets in the light of eternity on life, and passes a true judgment on it. Happiness is not to be sought, but holiness; unhappiness is not to be shunned, but sin. What does Lady Oswald, or my poor friend Gresson, think of earthly joy or sorrow now? Oh! how they will despise and wonder at that folly which puts a value upon anything but the favour of God! His love might have been sought and enjoyed in every event, in every duty, at every moment; and what paltry things drew us from Him! Thus the highest saint in heaven will think on the review of life.

6th April.—My dearest, I have just received your letter, full of sorrow, alas, alas! His sisters will feel it deeply, but my sympathy follows the dead more than the living. You know the universality of my hopes for sinners. I hope that He who came to bruise the serpent's head and to destroy the works of the devil, will not cease his labours of love till every particle of evil introduced into this world has been converted into good. When I was in Paris our common walk together was a burial-ground at the top of his street; and I had sometimes the hope that God would speak to his heart out of these graves. I loved him well, and I ought to have written more to him. He wrote to me, and he received kindly at least anything that was said to him, however contrary to his own notions or feelings. There was much true-heartedness in him. I trust that in

the records of eternity there is an hour fixed when his spirit shall look on the Sun of Righteousness, and be converted into his likeness; and even I should wish to hope that the God of all grace had, before He called him hence, given him a preparation for it. Every person who knew him must know that his feelings were always far above his expressions, and he talked lightly sometimes of things which he did not feel lightly. . . . The churchyard (burying-ground, I mean) is increasing its associations for me. Mrs. Erskine, Baillod the Swiss artist, Scholl, another Swiss, whose family I know, Mrs. Colquit's daughter, and now Gresson. The situation is most beautiful, and the weather lovely. The sun and the blue sky so pure, and beautiful, and melancholy, and the young leaves coming out: the mystery of nature's yearly resurrection spreading its charm over the earth. I have not yet lost my delight in nature. I don't go to see pictures and statues now; but I can look at the blue of heaven, and at the clear deep shadows of the mountains, and at the sun which sets just before my windows, and I can mourn with the ruined walls. Well, "the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." That is something worth repeating. It is from the mouth of God, and it is said to you and me. It is something for a living hour or a dying hour, or an hour beyond time. I have talked with Gresson about these things, and I have often repeated to him those words, and now he knows all about it. Perhaps he remembers our conversations, and wonders at the deadness and darkness of them. I had a little copy of the Psalms with me at the funeral, which I opened, and read the concluding verses of the 73d Psalm, from the 23d verse, and I pulled some leaves of which I send you two. My darling cousin, God

bless you! You are probably retired to your room just now. I hope you do not allow your mind to feed uselessly upon sorrow, not that I expect you are ever to be free of sorrow, but that you ask the knowledge of that blessed secret which is contained in that word, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." . . . I would join your prayers, that God would comfort the mourners, and sanctify unto them their afflictions, and that he would give us to know his holy love in Christ Jesus. That is life eternal, whether in this world or in another. That is the only portion. It is about midnight here, and time is little more than an hour earlier at Gartur. It is about eleven now with you. I like to think of you. I know the shape of your room, and the chair. I know some that you pray for, and many that you think of. What are you thinking of now? The sorrows of the living, or the blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord, or that blessed remedy which heals all evil—the blood of Christ? Good-night. . . .

30. TO MISS CHRISTIAN ERSKINE.

ROME, 12*th April* 1827.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—I am away far from you in body, but I have confidence in you that your affection does not depend altogether on your eye. I know that you love many whom you do not see, and whom you will never see until the resurrection day. The spiritual world is just near or distant, according to our own thoughts of it. It is always near and close to those whose hearts are upon it. That ladder which Jacob saw in his dream at Bethel is Jesus Christ. On Him, as on a ladder, the soul can mount to God, and to the place where God dwells, surrounded by the love and praise of blessed angels and redeemed sinners, and down the ladder the blessing of God, the gifts of the Spirit, and the intimations of His loving-kindness, descend to us.

It is good exercise to run up and down that ladder, and, my dear cousin, thank God we may do this though confined to a bed or a sofa, and there we may meet our friends out of the body or in the body. I hope you sometimes think of me when you are upon the ladder, and that you look about for me. Ah! there is a time coming, I hope, when we shall go up and come no more down, but be pillars in the temple of our God, and go no more out. There is one thought that I am sure connects you and me very much together, a thought partly of earth and partly of heaven, and that is the thought of Dr. Stuart. I often feel a wish to write to him, to ask what he thinks of certain things, for I have no friend now of the same kind on earth. I have excellent friends, but none who take the same vivid interest that he did in some subjects that occupy me. I have this instant received a letter from Christian and her husband, mentioning the death of Mary Graham.[1] Alas! alas! my poor uncle and aunts. She was a sweet and beautiful flower, and I hope now transplanted into the paradise of God. And Charles Hay too! Dear Mary's removal had been long expected. She had herself for long had it from time to time presented to her mind by faithful friends who counselled her, and prayed with her, and kept her from deluding herself. Katherine[2] was there, and were I dying, I should like to have Katherine at my deathbed. But there was no Katherine at Charles's bedside. I saw a great deal of him when I passed through Paris in the end of last September. He was full of kind-heartedness and true-heartedness. And Robert[3] so far off! His sisters must feel very severely. They have not been permitted to receive the last words and looks of any of

[1] Only daughter of his uncle, Thomas Graham, Esq. of Airth.
[2] His sister-in-law and cousin, Mrs. James Erskine.
[3] Robert Hay.

their brothers. May God bless these wounds to the spiritual good of those who suffer from them! Young spirits: how many are now dead whose births I remember, gone to be added to the generations of past time! I have been reading lately Irving's book on the Prophecies, and a very striking book it is. He writes evidently with the fullest conviction that his interpretation is right. If he is right, we are on the eve of a tremendous catastrophe, in comparison with which all the calamities of the French Revolution are as nothing. Infidelity is to destroy Popery, and to break up the very foundations of all the civil and political institutions of Europe, and then infidelity itself is to be destroyed with a fearful destruction. I have only got one volume yet, but really I think he marks the coincidence of the prophecies, and the events of the last forty years, very fairly. According to his view, our blessed Lord is Himself to appear on earth in forty years. Our eyes shall be opened from the dust of death to behold Him. Miss Traill,[1] who took Dr. Stuart's miniature for me, lent me the book. Give my kindest regards to Miss Stuart, and to any friends who inquire about me. I think often of your lane, and your garden, and your gum-cistus plant, and the key of Heriot's Green, and of the venerable forms that I remember moving there, but are now no longer seen by the mortal eye. I wonder whether we are ever to see each other in this world. I should like it; but let us meet on the ladder, and meet in the upper sanctuary. God grant it, for Christ's sake. Remember me kindly to your brother and to the Burnetts, through Miss Stuart. T. E.

31. TO DR. CHALMERS.

ROME, 19*th April* 1827

MY DEAR SIR,—This letter will probably find you in the

[1] Daughter of the minister of Panbride.

midst of the business of the General Assembly, harassed considerably both by friends and foes. In the meantime I am quietly looking upon the seat of the Beast, and wondering at him, at the manner of his existence, and at his duration. I have met here with Irving's book upon the Prophecies. I don't suppose that any mere interpreter of prophecy has ever before assumed such a tone of confidence and authority. I am a little surprised that the fate of former interpreters has not warned him. He is scarcely meek enough. He seems to intend to brave and insult such of his readers as hesitate about yielding their entire consent; but it is a magnificent book, full of honest zeal. There is a Romish priest here, who in the reign of the last Pope wrote a book on the Prophecies, in which the year 1830 is fixed as the termination of all the wrath. He carried his MS. to the regular licenser, who showed it to the Pope before granting leave to publish: the Pope desired that licence should be given him to publish it in the year 1831. I have an Italian master, who is a true, honest, believing Catholic, and who cordially pities the souls of the Protestants. He tells me that the study of the Prophecies here is becoming much more general than formerly, and that there are many expecting a great crisis.

I am almost a believer in the nearness of the end, and I like to encourage in myself any idea which leads to watchfulness and prayer, and which gives a greater prominency to spiritual and eternal objects. I desire to look and wait for the coming of the Lord, and to long for His appearing. I wish you were here for a month now, instead of making your usual tour. The Niobé of nations is a happy name for Rome. She is full of beauty and interest and sorrow, but there is a lie in her right hand. I have met with some good specimens of Christianity from our own country here at Rome. I have never yet seen a Catholic who was

deeply spiritually-minded. I have not found any in the style of à Kempis; they are formalists even when they are honest believers, which is not a very usual thing amongst the tolerably educated classes, and never at all in France. The functions of the Holy Week are just over, and such mummery to be sure! and then the celebration of Easter by an illumination! The existence of such a system, ecclesiastical and political, is a fact as unaccountable, or more so, than the continued separate preservation of the Jews,—the government of a corporation of priests submitted to during the military turbulency of the middle ages, and the enlightened revolutionary scepticism of the present day, and a system of imposition, and which imposes upon no one, and is yet opposed by no one. It is a very strange thing. I was out at Tivoli the other day; though the cascades are ruined, yet it has beauty enough, and to spare. They are trying to repair them. There are olive trees there above a thousand years old—five would reach to the flood. The time since Adam's creation looks very short when measured in this way—a succession of six olive trees. The obelisks (Egyptian), of which there are many here, bring us still nearer. My eye at this moment rests on the Pantheon, the most beautiful thing in Rome.

Give my best regards to Mrs. Chalmers and your children. Farewell. Many thanks for your letter.—Yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

32. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

ROME, *May* 2, 1827.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—I know that I cannot hear from you now for some time, so I must even write to you instead of it, as the next best thing. I have been now nearly three months in this place, and I don't tire of it. . . . I met yesterday with Sir William Gell, one of our unfortunate

Queen's attendants; he is a man of great antiquarian lore, and delights in communicating it to any who will take interest in it. He is a reader of hieroglyphics: he says that the oldest obelisk in Rome, that at St. John Lateran, is contemporary with Abraham. What do you think of that?—a few hundred years later than the deluge. The human race is a very recent creation. It was only the other day that Adam and Eve were in Eden walking with God, and I hope we shall all be walking with God again soon, for oh it is a dull thing as well as a wicked thing to walk without Him. I have got a very beautiful little drawing of the first appearance of our parents before God after their offence, by a German artist here. It is one of a series intended to be engraved for a Bible. The Deity is represented in the human form, which perhaps you will be a little shocked by, but in that form there is a compassion, and a regret, and a holy dignity, which will soon reconcile you to the apparent impropriety. If I had a good opportunity, I daresay that I should send it home to you to keep for me till I came to claim it. Good-night, my dear cousin. The weather is lovely, and the acacia trees in fullest blow and beauty, the Campagna clad in the richest green, all the vegetable world in the beauty of its youth, and the sun and the sky in glory. I saw a fire-fly to-night as I was coming home. Good-night again.

3*d May*.—I rode to Gabii to-day,—one of the earliest conquests of the Republic, and the great quarry of their earliest buildings. You know that most of their massy stone buildings, and especially in that early time, were made without cement of any kind—one immense block was laid above another—well fitted in surface to receive it, and so they remain some of them in spite of time, and earthquakes, and fires, and floods, and wars, and Pagans and Christians. You know that Miss F. Mackenzie is here now. I don't

see nearly so much of her as I ought to do, or as I wish to do, for she has the attraction of unhappiness as well as many other good qualities. This night I have been taking leave of friends who are going off to-morrow morning for Naples. You tell me not to go to Naples, but just to come home, but I have engaged to go: however, I intend to make but a short stay there; I wish to see the islands, I did not visit them when I was there last, and they have the fame of exceeding beauty. Also my courier is engaged to be married to the daughter of the innkeeper at Mola di Gaeta, and as he has made me his confidant through the whole affair, I must go to Naples that he may see her in passing. He is an excellent servant, and very much attached—to his master I mean—for as to the *ragazza di Mola*, as he calls her, though I have no doubt that he will be a good husband, yet I don't think that he would lose a night's rest by the engagement being broken off. Good-night. This is very incoherent gossip to send to such a distance. My dear cousin, there is more worth in ——, she is most conscientious, and she has real friendship in her as well as real piety, that I can answer for. Is the Limekilns man in this earthly prison yet? Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. I have been reading a very curious book lately by Law, the author of the "Serious Call;" it is entitled the *Spirit of Prayer*, most mystical it is, but most beautiful. It is not the gospel, but I think it may be profitably read by those who know the gospel. Those passages which I admired so much in the translator's preface to à Kempis are taken from it. Perhaps I mentioned this to you before.

6*th*, *Albano*.—I came here yesterday on my way to Naples, and have passed my Sunday here. Albano is a fairy land, and the season is enchanting. The air is full of fragrance from the flowers, and of music from the birds.

The nightingale is the chief minstrel. All the other birds seem to be listeners and learners for the time; occasionally the cuckoo is heard. Ariccia is close to Albano, you know. . . . Law in his latter days took to reading the works of Jacob Böhme, a German divine, and from him he learned much. I should like to read him too, but I must relearn German in order to fit myself for it. I like the German mind better than the mind of any other nation, our own not excepted. We are very meagre in comparison of them. I like the Prussian *chargé d'affaires* at Rome.[1] The last time I saw him, he was telling me of cases of somnambulism, or animal magnetism as it is called. He says that many extraordinary instances have been quite authenticated. They are as extraordinary as the most remarkable cases of second sight in the Highlands. Good-night.

7th, Mola di Gaeta.—The Mediterranean is spread beneath my eye. The shore is covered with the remains of ancient villas. The lemon-trees are loaded with fruit, and the orange-trees with blossom. The productions of the southern climates are becoming more frequent. I have seen several palm-trees to-day, beautiful things they are, children of the sun, and associated in my mind with Abraham and the patriarchs who sat under palm-trees, and Deborah who judged Israel under a palm-tree. Did not I mention Irving's book on the Prophecies to you? It is worth your reading. Do the Keir ladies take interest in the signs of the times? Give them my best love—I love them well, and I do not wonder at any degree of friendship between Jeannie and Lady M., for friendship is a thing of the heart, and it may exist amidst many dissimilarities when there is so strong an agreement, as there is between them, in love to God.

8th, Mola.—It is a lovely morning. The bay so sweetly

[1] Chevalier Bunsen.

curved—the ripple of the clear water on the shore. The islands, which have not yet thrown off their morning veil of mist, if anything so light can be called mist, and then Vesuvius stretching to the west and south, and the promontory and town of Gaeta, and many an olive-clad hill, to the north. It is not six o'clock yet in your country. How fresh everything is, and these warblers that fill the air with music. For a moment one might forget that solemn word, "Cursed be the ground for thy sake," but the appearance of the people recalls it. The earth was cursed not for its own sake, and no curse can be severe which is not deserved—it is the evil desert itself which is the curse —except in one instance, where the righteous suffered for the wicked; and blessed be His name, the day is coming when that sacrifice of His shall have its perfect work, when sin shall be no more, when the waters of human bitterness shall be healed, when there shall be no more curse.

9*th*, *Naples.*—I arrived here yesterday, and I am now sitting in the house where my father died—the Crocelle—in 1791. I have often wished that I had the slightest trace of him in my memory, but I was just two years old when he left home. I know nothing of my father's mind, except very general traits. I don't know how he felt when he knew that he was on the borders of the invisible world. There is something very striking in the relation between a father and a child when death prevents any personal acquaintance between them. When he parted from me, he knew as little of me as I did of him, and yet no doubt he felt an interest in me; but when he looked at me he could no more conjecture what was within me, or what my destiny might probably be, than he could conjecture what was going on in the moon. What a strange interest that is which we can thus take in beings that we are absolutely ignorant of! I feel a love for my father, and a deep inter-

est in him. Are these earthly connections to extend beyond this world in any shape? . . . —Yours ever, T. E.

33. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

ISLAND OF ISCHIA, *4th June* 1827.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—. . . This is a beautiful place. The view from the house where I am living is, I think, the very finest that I ever saw. I have found here a poor man who took the fever of the country in Sicily about a year ago, and he has been in a state of constant suffering ever since. Bodily pain is a great trial. It interferes with the mind's power of thought, that power on which we pride ourselves, and which we convert into an idol, although it is a gift from God. He tells me that he is seeking God, but cannot find Him; and that he reads the Bible, but cannot get satisfaction from it. Alas! alas! I was at Capri the other day, the island where the Emperor Tiberius had a palace, where he spent much of his time in profligacy, and in cruelty, and in misery. Jesus was in Judea when that building was erected. It is a very singular island, divided into two parts by a range of rocks, so lofty and so steep that there is no communication, except by means of a stair cut in the rock (of immense antiquity it must be) of 535 steep steps, and there is no landing-place on the upper part from the sea either. Every foot of the island which is not under cultivation is covered with myrtles, which were just coming into flower. Good-night.—I have been tempted to stay two or three days more here. I enter into the spirit of its beauty—it is not like anything else I have ever seen. La Sentinella is the name of my inn; and it received its name from its being the post of an outlook who gave notice of the approach of Saracen corsairs, who used to ravage this country some centuries ago, and carry off the inhabitants as slaves. It commands the whole view of the Neapolitan

coast, from Vesuvius northward to Terracina—a coast of most picturesque, and bold and various form, and then the island of Procyta, dividing that part of the sea into lakes, and then the unbounded ocean to the west—and the home scenery of the island, which is rich and wild beyond fancy. The house is situated on the point of a narrow ridge of very elevated ground, and overlooks the sea; on each side of the ridge, about 20 yards on the one side, and not so much as one yard on the other, the ground sinks down into a beautiful theatre, covered at present with one mass of verdure.

Rome, 23*d*. . . . —Within the last six weeks I have seen much misery in different forms. I wonder now how life ever could have appeared to me a sunny thing. There is a heavy cloud over it. I really wish to be home now, but I know not when I may be permitted. Farewell, my dear cousin. May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ bless you with the spirit of holy unworldly peace, extinguishing in you the life of the old nature, and giving you a new life, yea, becoming Himself your life. Will you ask Mr. Greig as a particular favour, that he would conscientiously, as unto the Lord, and not as unto man, assist my friends in finding some proper person for the Ferry Chapel?[1] Farewell.

34. TO HIS SISTER MRS. PATERSON.

ALBANO, 26*th July* 1827.

. . . It is warm here, but I have never yet felt the heat

[1] A chapel in the village of Broughty-Ferry, which lay near Linlathen, built originally by the Haldanes as one of their missionary stations. It was then the only place of worship in the village, and the services in it, conducted generally by laymen, had been irregular, and growing more infrequent. Mr. Erskine bought this chapel, and invited ministers of different Churches to occupy its pulpit. Occasionally on Sunday evenings he delivered an address in it himself.

oppressive, not so much so as when I was at Gartur last year. There are woods, and valleys, and lakes, and mountains so near that they maintain a perpetual freshness in the air; but they say that it is dreadful in Rome. I have bought a horse, and make constant use of him in conveying me over this lovely country. The two lakes of Albano and Nemi were, at some period beyond the memory of man, the craters of two immense volcanos, in form very like the crater of Vesuvius. These craters are not above half way up filled with water, and the banks (which are very precipitous from the water edge) are covered with wood of every age, and boldly broken by immense volcanic rocks; and their top ridge is crowned by picturesque villages, and convents with white walls, and lofty pines, and cypresses, and ilexes. At sunset the bells from these villages and convents, as they answer each other from the different points of the ridge, and as they sink or swell on the breeze, produce that effect which Mrs. Radcliffe intended to produce in many of her descriptions. Humboldt, in his descriptions of the South American scenery, compares it with this district from Nemi to Tivoli, which he thinks the finest in the Old World. It wants, however, the magic light of Naples. The view from the Sentinella at Ischia is of a higher order, in my humble opinion. The Appian Way, the queen of the old Roman roads, passes through Albano. Its course is marked by the massive antique pavement, and by the ruined monuments of the forgotten dead, which line it on both sides. I think that it was a fine idea in the old Romans (and it was the custom also in Greek cities) to erect their tombs by the sides of their principal roads and approaches to their towns. It is far better than Westminster Abbey, especially when you are obliged to pay half-a-crown to see them there. These tombs were magnificent towers, round or square, almost

solid through, from twenty to thirty or more feet in diameter. Many of them, Adrian's tomb, now called the Castle of St. Angelo, for instance, and the Cecilia Metella, were employed as military positions in after-times. I am reading German and Dante, who has been very well translated into English lately by—I forget his name just now. I am at present occupied with the Purgatory, in which there is much beautiful poetry. The idea of great present suffering, enlightened by the assurance of future eternal blessedness, is a fine subject for poetry and for thought (which poetry ought to be). In truth this world is purgatory to a spirit that knows God; and the terms which Dante addresses to the spirits with whom he converses in purgatory may properly be addressed to every Christian:—

O creatura che ti mondi,
Per tornar bella a colui che ti fece.

O creature who thyself unsoilest,
To return beautiful to Him who thee made.

27*th*.—The Secretary to the French Embassy here, a friend of mine, tells me that he is going to-morrow to Paris with despatches; and as a motive to give him letters, he says that he goes quicker than the post. I should like to go myself, but I cannot leave the poor invalid. I have just returned from a delicious ride, part of the way through a forest of fine old chestnut trees. They look like antediluvian patriarchs. . . . I expect the Prussian *chargé d'affaires* out in this neighbourhood immediately, which I look to with pleasure, for I really like the man. He has a fine, wide, adventurous, metaphysical German capacity, and is, I believe, a Christian. He is married to an English woman, a very good woman. I shall ride with him and learn German philosophy. God bless you.

35. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

ALBANO, 31*st July* 1827.

MY DEAREST SISTER,— . . . I am living a very regular life here. I get up early, between four and five in the morning, for the mornings and evenings are the only times for exercise. I ride out till eight, when I breakfast, and then remain in the house till six in the evening, with the exception of an hour in the middle of the day, which I pass in a delicious *bosco* here close to my house, under the shade of oaks and ilexes. I have a great deal of time at my disposal by this division of the day, and I read and study a good deal. I am learning German, which is much to my taste, and this very day M. Bunsen, the Prussian *chargé d'affaires*, is coming out from Rome to reside for the summer at Castello Gandolfo, which is a pleasure to me, for he is an instructive, excellent man, and is very friendly with me.—Yours ever, T. E.

36. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

LINLATHEN, 10*th November* 1827.

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . How reluctant we are that any of our friends should get into the promised land, whilst we are in the wilderness. Ay, and what a hold we take of the wilderness in spite of all its barrenness and fiery serpents. This arises from a want of spirituality. Don't you think so? I wish you would read the "Spirit of Prayer" and the "Spirit of Love," two works by Law, the author of the "Serious Call," and tell me what you think of them. I have been much struck by them. There is a great spirituality in them. I really like them much better than Mr. Irving's "Prophecies." They are, however, very mystical, and if your taste is much averse to mysticism, you may not like them. But I think that you can scarcely help liking

them, such a view they give of the love of our God, and of that intimate, and blessed, and glorious union with Himself, to which He hath called us. But what is the use of recommending books to those who are taught of the Spirit to read the Bible, and to see in it a message from their loving Father to their own souls? Happy the heart that has learned to say *my* God! All religion is contained in that short expression, and all the blessedness that man or angel is capable of.

Dr. Chalmers is appointed to the Divinity Chair in the Edinburgh University. May the Lord bless His work in the hand of His servant!

37. TO DR. CHALMERS.

LINLATHEN, 10*th November* 1827.

MY DEAR SIR,—I cannot express to you how much I have been delighted by your appointment to the Divinity Chair in Edinburgh. I have felt it to be a matter of much thankfulness and much hope. It is the situation to which the wishes of many have long destined you, from the conviction that you have a particular gift for the discharge of its high duties. May the Lord answer the many prayers which have been and will be presented on your behalf on this occasion, and send an awakening spirit to arouse and vivify the torpid Church of Scotland, and employ you as an honoured instrument for exciting and preparing many who may be zealous and wise pleaders for God with the coming generation.

I am loath to miss your preliminary lectures this year, but I must go to the west to see my friends at Cadder. I hope, however, that you will think seriously of publishing your Moral Philosophy lectures, or at least the views which you have given of the subject, so far as they differ

from those which have been prevalent in this country for three quarters of a century back. Moral Philosophy and self-conceited infidelity have long been near neighbours, and may in fact be expected to be so whilst man wishes to form a system in which God can be dispensed with, *i.e.* whilst man continues as he is.

On my return from the west country, I hope to be able to pay you a visit. All here desire to be remembered by you. Give my best regards to Mrs. Chalmers and your children.—Yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

CHAPTER VI.

Case of the Rev. J. M'Leod Campbell of Row—Letters of 1828, 1829, and 1830.

On returning to Scotland in October 1827, Mr. Erskine lost no time in committing to the press a work the preparation of which had engaged his leisure hours on the Continent. "The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel" was published early in 1828.[1] It excited so immediate and wide an interest, that a second edition was called for before the end of the year. Its author was not prepared for so cordial a reception of this volume by some, still less for so severe a reprobation of it by others. Dr. Chalmers, though dissenting from one of its positions, went cordially in with its leading principles, and said, over and over again to his friends, that it was one of the most delightful books that ever had been written. There was another reader of it, the impression made on whom was destined to have wide effects. Frederick Denison Maurice, in 1852, dedicating the volume on "The Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament" to Mr. Erskine, says, "The pleasure of associating my name with yours, and the kind interest which you expressed in some of these sermons when you heard them preached, might not be a sufficient excuse for the liberty which I take in dedicating them to you. But I have a much stronger reason. I am under

[1] See Appendix, No. I.

obligations to you, which the subject of this volume especially brings to my mind, and which other motives, beside personal gratitude, urge me to acknowledge. . . . Have we a gospel for men, for all men? Is it a gospel, that God's will is a will to all good, a will to deliver them from all evil? Is it a gospel that He has reconciled the world unto Himself? Is it this absolutely, or this with a multitude of reservations, explanations, contradictions? It is more than twenty years since a book of yours brought home to my mind the conviction, that no gospel but this can be of any use to the world, and that the gospel of Jesus Christ is such a one. . . . Many of my conclusions may differ widely from those into which you have been led; I should be grieved to make you responsible for them. But if I have tried in those sermons to show that the story of the prophets and kings of the Old Testament is as directly applicable to the modern world as any Covenanter ever dreamed, but that it is applicable because it is a continual witness for a God of righteousness, not only against idolatry, but against that notion of a mere sovereign Baal or Bel, which underlies all idolatry, all tyranny, all immorality, I may claim you as their spiritual progenitor."

The following letter was at the same time addressed to Mr. Erskine :—

My dear Friend,—You will see by a book which will reach you by this post that I have taken a great liberty with your name. I was afraid you would refuse me if I asked you beforehand, or that I should make you responsible for what I said. I have longed to do what I have done for many years, when an occasion should offer. I wished to tell others how much I believe they as well as I owe to your books, how they seem to me to mark a crisis in the theological movement of this time. I would rather

take another, less public, way of saying what I owe to your personal kindness and your conversation, but you will, I hope, forgive me and believe that I did think it a duty to express what I feel towards you, in connection with the task which God has shown me that I am to perform for His Church, that of testifying that the grace of God has appeared to all men. Accept our best and most cordial Christmas greetings to you and all your circle. . . .—Ever, my dear friend, yours very affectionately,

F. D. MAURICE.

December 21, 1852.

It was long after its publication before Mr. Erskine knew that his book had rendered such a service in such a quarter. But it was not long till he was surprised and delighted to find that the ideas of the love of God in Jesus Christ as embracing the whole human family, of the incarnation and death of the Redeemer as having removed all obstacles to the immediate, free, and full forgiveness of every sinner of our race, almost in the very form in which he had himself in this volume expressed them, were already being fervently proclaimed by at least one minister of the Church of Scotland. If not before, it must have been immediately after the publication of the "Unconditional Freeness," that he heard Mr. M'Leod Campbell preach in Edinburgh. Returning from the church Mr. Erskine said with great emphasis to a friend who accompanied him, "I have heard to-day from that pulpit what I believe to be the true gospel."

Hearing his own favourite ideas unfolded and enforced with such intense earnestness, and learning at the same time of the gathering storm which was so soon to burst over the preacher's head, Mr. Erskine in the summer of 1828 made his first pilgrimage to Row, a parish lying on

the banks of the beautiful Gairloch, in Dumbartonshire, of which Mr. Campbell had been ordained as the minister in 1825. Personal acquaintance deepened exceedingly the first favourable impressions. One life-lasting friendship began. Here, too, and now, another kindred friendship had its birth.

One Sunday in the preceding summer (1827) "my pulpit," says Mr. Campbell, "was occupied by my young friend Mr. Scott.[1] I heard him with very peculiar delight. His preaching, though his second Sabbath, was with a sober, solemn composure, that would have seemed a delightful attainment in a man of much experience. The progress he has already made in the divine life, the elevation and clearness of his views, the spirit of love which he breathes in every word, and the single-eyed devotedness to his Master's glory, are to me most delightful illustrations of the power of simple faith." [2]

Mr. Scott was with Mr. Campbell again in the summer of 1828, and there met Mr. Erskine.[3] It was quite unique the triple friendship which had thus a common birthtime and birthplace; one peculiar feature marking it in each case. "That historical independence," Dr.

[1] Mr. A. J. Scott, son of the Rev. Dr. Scott of Greenock, afterwards Principal of Owens College, Manchester.

[2] *Reminiscences*, p. 22.

Edward Irving met with Scott during the same summer (1828), and arrived as rapidly at the same high estimate of Scott, and invited him to be his assistant in London. "Sandy Scott," he wrote to Dr. Chalmers a month or two afterwards, "is a most precious youth, the finest and strongest faculty for pure theology I have yet met with." Nor did his after experience of him in one of the closest of clerical relationships alter this estimate. "A young man," he wrote of him in 1830, "so learned and accomplished in all kinds of discipline I have never met with, and as pious as he is learned, and of great, very great, discernment in the truth, and faithfulness Godward and manward."—*Irving's Life*, vol. ii. 68, 126.

[3] They met first in 1826 when Scott was attending some classes in the Edinburgh University, and was acting as tutor in the family of one of Mr. Erskine's friends.

Campbell wrote a year or two before his death, "which we mark when two minds, working apart and without any interchange of thought, arrive at the same conclusions, is always an interesting and striking fact when it occurs; and it did occur as to Scott and myself; and also as to Mr. Erskine and me, and I believe too as to Mr. Erskine and Scott."[1] All through life each of these three friends found in the other two what he found in none beside. Intellectually, socially, spiritually, they moved in separate orbits; each having a path of his own, which with absolute independence he pursued. But the paths lay very close to one another; and so entirely on the same plane, sloping upwards to the great central Source of light and life and love, as to constitute a separate sphere of religious ideas, aims, and aspirations, apart from and far above that of many with whom their names came afterwards to be associated.

For three months in each of the summers of 1829 and 1830, Mr. Erskine, with his brother-in-law, Captain Paterson, and family, resided at Row. His personal efforts in the way of supporting and co-operating with Mr. Campbell were multiplied and unceasing. Morning and evening at family prayers he gave a short exposition of Scripture, listened to by as many as could find entrance. Pen and press were busily employed.[2] Three hours—often more—were each day given to addressing still larger audiences.

[1] *Life of the Rev. Mr. Story*, p. 152.

[2] In 1830 a little volume was issued from R. B. Lusk's prolific press at Greenock, entitled "Extracts of Letters to a Christian Friend by a Lady, with an Introductory Essay by Thomas Erskine, Esq., Advocate." This Introductory Essay contains the clearest and most condensed statement of all that was peculiar in the teaching of Mr. Campbell and of Mr. Erskine at this time, and was frequently referred to as such by those who wrote in opposition to them. See the "Gairloch Heresy Tried," by Dr. Burns of Paisley; "A Vindication of the Religion of the Land, etc., in a Letter to Thomas Erskine, Esq., by the Rev. A. Robertson, A.M.," etc. etc.

Mr. Campbell, in truth, needed all the support that could be given him. From almost every leading pulpit in Scotland he had been denounced. Pamphlet after pamphlet appeared proclaiming the depth and dangerous nature of the errors into which he had fallen. At first his own people adhered loyally and almost unanimously to him. At last, however, on the 30th March 1830, a few of their number lodged a complaint before the Presbytery of Dumbarton. A visitation of his parish was appointed to be held on Thursday the 8th July, and Mr. Campbell was required to preach on that day before his co-presbyters. He did so; keeping back no part of the teaching for which he had been condemned. Mr. Erskine was present on the occasion, and has told us of the result. The complainers against their minister were instructed to have their charges framed into a libel (or indictment), the chief count in which was that Mr. Campbell had promulgated the doctrine of "universal atonement and pardon through the death of Christ." In prosecution of this libel a day was named for the examination of witnesses, among whom Mr. Erskine's relatives, Captain Paterson of Linlathen, and Captain Stirling of Glentyan, gave evidence in favour of Mr. Campbell; his own headquarters being all the while at Row, watching the whole proceedings with the liveliest interest. These proceedings were brought to a close by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May 1831. After the counsel for the accused and the representative of the Presbytery and Synod had been heard, two motions were laid before the House; the one that Mr. Campbell should at once be deposed, the other that he should in the meantime be only suspended. The former was carried by a majority of 119 to 6.

Before the sentence was actually pronounced, which was done forthwith, some slight discussion as to the order of

procedure took place. Dr. Macknight of Edinburgh, who held at the time the office of Chief Clerk of the Assembly, on being appealed to, in the height of his emotion, and meaning exactly the reverse of what he said, was heard to declare that "these doctrines of Mr. Campbell would remain and flourish after the Church of Scotland had perished, and was forgotten." Mr. Erskine, who was present, caught the words. Turning to those behind him, he whispered, "This spake he not of himself, but being High Priest—he prophesied."

The same Assembly that deposed Mr. Campbell deprived Mr. Scott of his licence as a preacher of the gospel. Mr. Scott had expressed opinions as to the universality of the atonement identical with those of Mr. Campbell, and, as to the Sabbath question, similar to those afterwards adopted by Dr. Norman M'Leod. Though holding the same doctrine as to the atonement, to Scott it appeared that their view of this doctrine was contrary to that affirmed in the Westminster Confession of Faith, to the whole doctrine of which every minister of the Church of Scotland was bound to adhere. Campbell thought otherwise, and endeavoured to convince the Assembly that though not in full harmony with what he taught, the Confession did not absolutely contradict it. The two friends were present each at the other's trial before the Assembly. When Scott's case closed they walked home together. "After that dreary night in the Assembly," he tells us, "the dawn breaking upon us, as we returned at length, alike condemned, to our lodging in the New Town of Edinburgh, I turned round and looked upon my companion's face under the pale light, and asked him, Could you sign the Confession now? His answer was No. The Assembly was right: our doctrine and the Confession are incompatible."

38. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

LINLATHEN, 26*th December* 1828.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,—The feeling that I am unsympathised with by those whose sympathy is dearest to me is not that which pains me most in the communication I have received from you. In general, I feel a great demand for sympathy from those I love, just because I love them, and because that love gives their sympathy a value to me beyond the things themselves in which I ask their sympathy. But it is not so here. The thing in which I ask your sympathy is far dearer to me than any human sympathy; and I long for your sympathy, merely because I think I hold the truth, and I wish you to hold it also. I do not think that you can see the importance or the universality of Christ's atonement, if you can disapprove of the proclamation of it, though by a layman. You have told me that you believe that "Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world," in the obvious sense of these words. You have told me that you believe that this is God's message to this world of prodigals, that this is the message which is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe it. Well, do you also know that this doctrine is looked on as a heresy by almost all the teachers of religion in this country, and that a directly opposite doctrine is preached? If you believe in the universality of the atonement, you must believe that the limitation of it is a falsification of the record which God has given concerning His Son.

I live in the conviction that the record is continually falsified in the ears of the people of this country by those whom they are taught to look up to for instruction, to the dishonour of God's grace, and to the injury of the souls of men. God's message to the world is not delivered whilst

a limited atonement is preached; and so long as this erroneous interpretation of the message is preached from our orthodox pulpits, the people may have the Bible in their hands, but the unfaithful interpretation will be a veil on their hearts in the reading of it. There were many Bibles among the Jews when our Lord appeared amongst them, but the unfaithful interpretation put upon their contents by the scribes of the time blinded the people to the truth, and they rejected Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. —— must know that it is most important that, even when the people have the Bible in their hands, there should be some one near to say to them, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" I have known people long possessed of the Bible who never read it, partly because it was not pressed upon them; and I have known many who have long read the Bible without ever apprehending, even in theory, its most elementary truths, because they were accustomed to hear a false interpretation of them weekly from the pulpit. If ——'s arguments were good, there need be little anxiety to have a gospel ministry in a place well supplied with Bibles. I see people about me with Bibles in their houses and in their hands (and who think occasionally of religion too, some of them), to whom the message that God loves them is a perfect novelty even in sound. If I can do anything for any of these souls, these immortals, as an instrument in God's hands, am I to hesitate because I am classed in the world's list under one denomination of persons rather than another? I think that Christians are too often popular in the world, just on account of the remaining unchristianity that is in them. As long as Christianity subordinates itself to the world, the world will like it, because the world likes to have its conscience easy as to eternity, and the concurrence of a Christian gives it that ease. My dearly beloved friend, I

love you dearly. I know that I am not to expect full sympathy in the creation :—

> "Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe,
> Our hermit spirits dwell and range apart."

These are beautiful lines, and most true.

39. TO MR. AND MRS. MONEY.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 23*d Jan.* 1829.

MY BELOVED FRIENDS,—We have had a longer interval in correspondence, I think, now than ever we have had since our first acquaintance, but I have not ceased to love you or to think of you, and I doubt not of your thoughts and remembrances. About this time two years ago I was on the eve of quitting your hospitable house, after a long and delightful residence in it, for the more southern parts of Italy. Those days often recur to me—our trips to the garden and the Lido, and our visits to the Patriarch, and our quiet friendly evenings. May the Lord Jehovah, the God of peace, bless you exceedingly, my dear brother and sister, and all your children, present with you or absent.

I asked the favour of the General to convey to you a copy of a little work which I published last year on the Freeness of the Gospel, which I hope you received. I am aware that at Geneva our dear Malan takes a very different view of the subject, but in spite of his strong dissent, I feel more and more convinced that I have followed the Word of God in describing the Gospel. The Bible always charges man with being his own destroyer. It always charges man with resisting and refusing God's love, even when that love is entreating him to return : Rom. ii. 4, 5. The Bible declares that God's love embraces the whole human race, and that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world : John iii. 16, 17 ; 1 John ii. 2 ;

1 Tim. ii. 1-6; 2 Cor. v. 19, 20, 21. Are all then redeemed or purchased by Christ? Yes. What, are all saved? No, only those who believe: Mark xvi. 16. Are any then of those for whom Christ died lost at last? Yes, the Bible speaks of such: 2 Peter ii. 1. There we read of some who brought upon themselves swift destruction by denying the Lord who bought them. They were bought or redeemed by the Lord (for the words have the same meaning), and yet they brought on themselves swift destruction. And we read in the 10th chapter of Hebrews of those who have trodden under foot the Son of God, and have counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing; they were sprinkled then with that atoning blood, and yet they perished. Why then does one man believe and another not? Faith is the operation of the electing grace of God. No man yields to the truth until he is compelled by this electing grace of God. This is the proper place for election; faith is given through the channel of election. But the atonement is for all, and the invitation and command to believe in and to enjoy it is for all. When a man is condemned for unbelief, you cannot suppose that it is for not believing in God's love to others; assuredly it must be for disbelieving God's love to himself, for disbelieving that Christ died for him; and if he is condemned for disbelieving it, must it not have been indeed true that Christ did die for him, for otherwise it would not have been wrong in him to disbelieve it? So the Bible says to you and to me: 'God so loved thee as to give His Son to be a propitiation for thy sins.' I cannot see how one can arrive at a steady assurance on any other ground, for we cannot know our election except from marks in ourselves, and that is not the way of true assurance. Write to me about you all.

T. ERSKINE.

40. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

CADDER, *Wednesday, 11th March* 1829.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—I was sorry to let the architect leave this for Gartur the other day without carrying some palpable testimony of my ever grateful and affectionate remembrance of you, and therefore I have begun this letter, that another messenger from us may not go empty-handed to you. I almost wish that I were with you just now, and I wish we could feel the pure sap of the true vine so active within us, and so binding us together by its heavenly sympathy, that we might have an uninterrupted intercourse, and might feel each other's presence in the presence of our Root, and Head, and Fountain. A friend of mine told me that he had been at different times sensible of spiritual blessings bestowed on him through the prayers of particular persons at a distance. He was conscious of a special blessing, and he had a most distinct impression that that blessing came to him through the prayers of a particular person; and on asking the person afterwards, he learned that he had been praying for that very blessing on him. I like such a story exceedingly. I like to think of the condescension of our God answering such petitioners as men to the very letter of their petitions; and I like to think of His binding souls so close as to make them channels to each other of the water of life. And thus there is a great increase of the spirit of thanksgiving, for each blessing is not only a reason of gratitude to the receiver of it, but also to those whose prayers of love have been answered in the bestowment of it. I have Keble lying open before me. The hymns for the Holy Week are beautiful,—Monday is exquisite: I think that I like it best of them all. The use made of Andromache's farewell is quite filling to the heart, and the theology of the fourth stanza, "Thou art as

much his care," etc., is worth, in my mind, the whole Shorter and Longer Catechisms together. Good-night.

41. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

14 Royal Crescent, *May* 1829.

My dearest Cousin,—. . . Bishop K. is very amiable, and sees very well that love is the whole matter; but he does not show the true way of getting it. He seems to think that we are to love just by an exertion, a conscientious exertion. Now, will you look at the third chapter of John? In the third verse our Lord says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." He evidently means by that to inform Nicodemus that no improvement of his present faculties or principles could introduce him into the spiritual happiness which was the perfection of man's being, but that a new life was wanting in order to this. Well, what is this new life, and how is it to be had? For, if I don't know how to get it, my knowledge that it is necessary is of no use to me, but rather an aggravation of the evil. Look to the sixteenth verse, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." This is the life that is wanting. And what is it? It can be nothing else than God's love to the world in the gift of His Son. For what is it that enters into our hearts when we believe anything? Is it not the thing that we believe? Thus some friend of yours does you an unkindness which you know nothing of. Whilst you are ignorant of it, it does not enter into your mind, and of course does not affect you in any way. I hear of it, and tell you. You answer me, "I have known that person all my life, and I don't believe it." Whilst you continue to disbelieve it, it does not enter into your mind, and gives you no pain. I bring you irresistible evidence

—you believe it, and it enters and makes you miserable. So when a history of love is told, what is it that enters, when it is believed, but the love? It is thus in man's dealings with man; and though different in degree, and even in kind, yet in many respects it is thus also in our dealings with God. "God so loved the world," etc. God's love is the only spiritual life—the only sap of the universal vine, and it can only enter, as it cannot but enter, by being believed. I cannot tell you the delight that I have found in thinking of God's love to man as a disapproving love. Man confounds love and approbation, or love and interestedness. Thus a man loves those whom he thinks well of, or who are necessary to his happiness. But God's love acknowledges and demands nothing either amiable or serviceable in its objects. The love of my God is not diminished by His disapprobation of me. There is something remarkable in Christ's substitution for Barabbas in a way more especial than for any other individual, that he might be an example of those for whom he died. I hope dear M. has found God a "*réfuge très aisé à trouver*," as the French happily translate, "a habitation whereunto I may alway resort." May He dwell in her as a strength and a peace, and may she rejoice in Him with an exceeding joy. May she find Him in everything, for He is in everything, and then she will rightly find good in everything. . . .—Yours affectionately, T. E.

42. TO THE SAME.

Row Cottage, Helensburgh, *July* 1829.

My dear Cousin,—I long to speak with you of the great things of God—of that life which He hath given to us in His Son, the great Head, and through whom it is communicated to all the members, as the blood is communicated through the heart to all the members of the

natural body. This is the life hid with Christ in God, which is brought to light by the gospel; and it is of the same thing that the disciples were desired by the angel to testify, when he said to them, "Go and speak to the people all the words of this life." Death had entered the world by the belief of a lie,—this was the work of the devil; and He who came to destroy the work of the devil communicated this new life by the belief of a truth. The Word was with God and was God, and in Him was life, and the life became light, even the light of men. That is to say, the invisible life of the Godhead became visible in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. It became intelligible and palpable in His person and character. And as the light enters into us by our eyes seeing it so this life enters into us by our minds seeing it, *i.e.* by our believing it or knowing it as a truth. Now what does the Spirit testify concerning this light which is life? Look over the first chapter of the First Epistle of John, and the beginning of the first chapter of his Gospel. John Baptist was said to bear witness of that Light, and this is his witness of Him, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world," John i. 29. And see also what the Light said of Himself, John viii. 11 and 12, "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more. Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." These two verses ought never to have been severed. Their meaning consists in their union; the "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more," the sanctifying forgiveness of God manifested in Christ is the light of life, and he that seeth it hath the life. Precisely the same idea of the light is given in the first chapter of the First Epistle of John, 5th verse, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin" (the intervening matter in the sixth and

beginning of the seventh verses is merely a commentary on the words, God is light). The light consists in the forgiving holy love. Now mark, the works of light are works which proceed from seeing the light of this forgiving love; as the works of darkness are the works of those who do not know that they are forgiven. John begins his Epistle by saying that he was going to declare that which his own eyes had seen of the Word of life—even that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. He tells us that by the knowledge of this life, or by having seen this light, he had fellowship with the Father and the Son; and he declares it to others, that they also may partake of this same life, even the life which the Father lives and which the Son lives. And the way which he takes of introducing us into this fellowship is by simply declaring to us the characteristics of that light, which the life had become: "This is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin."

Christ was the New Head of the human nature. Now, my beloved friend, attend. Suppose we were in a churchyard, and saw the earth over the grave, where we had seen a human body interred some time before, begin to move, and at last we saw the head of that human body in perfect life elevating itself above the ground,—if astonishment would allow us to reason, should we not feel assured that the rest of the members would soon follow the head,—should we not know that there was life in the body again because there was life in the head? Christ is the second Adam, the real unfigurative Head of the human body. He had suffered death as a partaker of that tainted life which was under the curse; and then He rose again with a new life infused into Him. In the person of Christ risen then, we see God in fellowship with our nature, even with us;

and we also see a life which is communicated to all those who see—"Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more:" for this is the life made light, and those who see it have the life. In religious books we find the death of Jesus chiefly, almost exclusively pressed, whereas in the Bible we find that the apostles were ordained to be witnesses of His resurrection, Acts i. 22. See also Acts ii. 32, 33; also Acts iii. 15-26; Acts iv. 33; Acts v. 31, 32; x. 40, 41; xiii. 32, 33. Is it not clear that the resurrection is pressed on us by the apostles in a way quite different from what it is by ordinary religionists since their time?—Yours most affectionately, T. E.

In the death of Christ the old life was exhausted, and in the resurrection the new life was infused.

43. TO MADAME DE STAËL.[1]

25 St. Andrew's Square, Edinburgh,
4th Sept. 1829.

Gaussen is quite right in telling you that I do not forget you before God. But I am much ashamed of my negligence as a correspondent, especially when I consider what God has given us to correspond about. My dear friend, we may speak to each other about God's love—God's forgiving love in giving us His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. He has given His Son to you and to me, and in Him He has given us all things. When the Bible says, "Acquaint thyself with God and be at peace," it means to say that there is something in God which necessarily gives peace to every one that knows it. If a soul is not at peace, the only reason is because it does not know God. If Joseph's brethren, as they stood before him, and not knowing who he was, but hearing him speak roughly to them, had been

[1] Daughter of Madame Vernet, and daughter-in-law to the celebrated Madame de Staël.

told, "This is your brother Joseph," they would immediately have been filled with terror, thinking that he would now take vengeance on them for their treatment of him; but if they could have looked into his heart, and had seen there a forgiving love which yearned over them, and which was not in the smallest degree affected by their unkindness to him, it is evident that although they would have reproached themselves far more than ever they had done before, yet they would have had a perfect deliverance from all personal fears on their own account, they would have seen a ground of confidence in their brother's character which must at once have given them peace. If Joseph had loved all of them except one, then it could not have been said to that one, "Acquaint thyself with Joseph and be at peace," for the knowledge that he was really excluded from Joseph's love would have given him terror and not peace. And so if there were a single being whom God did not love, then it could not have been said to that being, "Acquaint thyself with God and be at peace." But as it is said generally to all, it must also be true to all that God loves them, and that it is only necessary for them to know God's feelings towards them, and to look into God's heart, in order to have perfect peace. This is the meaning of being saved by faith. If God did not love, and had not forgiven us, our salvation could only be produced by our doing something which might make a change in God's feelings towards us; that would be salvation by works, or by our doing something. But since God does love us and has forgiven us, we need not do anything to change God's feelings, and all that is necessary for our peace and confidence is to know what the actual state of God's feelings are toward us, and this is salvation by faith, *c'est à dire*, salvation by knowing our real circumstances. All human religions are founded on the principle that man must do something or feel some-

thing, or believe something, in order to make God love him and forgive him; whereas God's religion just contains a declaration that nothing of the kind is necessary on our part in order to make God forgive us, for that he hath *déjà*, already, loved us and forgiven us, and given us His Son, and in Him all things. He hath declared this to the whole race without any exception, as a truth to each individual; so that the difference between the most miserable hater of God and the happiest child of God does not consist in this, that God loves the one and does not love the other; but in this, that the one knows [1] God's love to himself and the other does not. It is the same difference as there is between two men standing with their faces to the sun, the one with his eyes shut and the other with his eyes open. . . .

And why has God taken such pains to satisfy us that He has indeed loved and forgiven all men? Just in order that every individual might see in God a perfect ground of confidence. Unless you know that God has forgiven you, and that He loves you, you cannot have any confidence in Him; and unless you have full confidence in Him, you cannot have peace with Him, you cannot open your heart to Him, you cannot love Him. It is the belief of His forgiving love to yourself which can alone open your heart to Him. This is the true meaning of the doctrine of personal assurance. It is not that God saves a man because he has an assurance of his own personal salvation, but that our hearts cannot open to God until we are satisfied that He loves ourselves with a forgiving love. Until we are satisfied of His love to us, we cannot love Him; and therefore we cannot obey Him, for there is no obedience without love. This is the meaning of John vi. 28, 29. When the multitude that

[1] The last words of Frederick D. Maurice to those around his deathbed were—"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the knowledge of* the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all!"

were following Jesus asked Him, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? He answered them, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." Their question was, "How are we to obey the commandments of God?" and His answer was, "You must begin by believing in God's forgiving love to you in sending His Son to be the propitiation for your sins." For until you believe this, it is impossible for you to obey the least of God's commandments, because the least of His commandments requires love, and you cannot love Him until you are assured that He loves you. The knowledge of our own personal forgiveness and of our being personally embraced in the love of God is the first step in Christianity. No one is a Christian until he knows this. And how may every one know this? See John i. 29, 2 Cor. v. 19, 1 Tim. ii. 1-6, 1 John ii. 2. The personal assurance rises out of the general declaration of forgiveness to all, and peace and joy and love rise out of the personal assurance.

I long much to see both Madame de Broglie and yourself, but it seems to me that God has called me to be a witness for the truth at home. I am continually engaged in preaching to small congregations at present—three hours every day, and often much more. If God lets me see it to be my duty to cross the Channel this autumn to see you, it will be a great delight to me. Give my most brotherly love in Christ Jesus to Madame de Broglie and to your dear mother. Give your child a kiss and a blessing from me, as from one who loved his father. Talk over this letter with Madame de B., and let me know how you feel about it.

44. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

15th September 1829.

MY DEAR COUSIN,— . . . I should be very sorry indeed to be the means of depriving —— of such a friend as ——. I

doubt not that God will make them channels of good to each other, although they may seem to injure each other at present. Both of them misapprehend altogether the nature and object of personal assurance. ——— talks of it as an asserting of one's confidence of an interest in God's forgiveness in spite of doubts and misgivings. I don't quote her words, but the idea is hers. She evidently regards it either as a self-satisfied conclusion to which one is led by a discovery of some supposed good in one's-self, or a wordy boldness of expression belied by an internal apprehension. And she supposes that the person who arrives at it imagines that he has arrived at something which may be approved of by God, and on which he may rest a further confidence. Now, there is nothing of all this in the doctrine. No man has a right to believe anything about his relation to God, except on God's own authority. If God has not told a man that his sins are forgiven him, it would be presumptuous in him to believe that they were forgiven; but if God has told him that they are forgiven, then the presumption consists in disbelieving or doubting it. You would not think it presumptuous in a man to believe that God loves and forgives him, unless you thought that God's forgiving love was limited to a particular class of characters, for instance, to those who believe, or who repent, or who amend; and therefore, when you hear a person say, "that he knows that God loves and forgives him," you immediately suppose that he assumes to himself to belong to one of these classes, and you are inclined to question him. "Are you sure now that your belief, or repentance, or amendment is real?" He might answer you, "God's forgiving love is declared not to any class, not to any character, but just to sin, and to the world, and to all men; and God says that those who don't believe in God's forgiving love to them make God a liar." Read that

account on the proclaiming of God's name to Moses given in the 33d and 34th chapters of Exodus, "The Lord, the Lord God, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, without clearing the guilty" (which last expression refers to the sacrifice of Christ, and just means through an atonement). As soon as Moses heard it, he thought, This is just the God that we want, for the people are continually committing sin, and this is a sin-forgiving God; and Moses made haste and said, Go with us; for this is a stiff-necked people. That *for* is an extraordinary word. Read also the 14th of Numbers, where this name is repeated.

But what is the use of faith in Christ at all? Is it that God forgives or loves a man for believing that Jesus Christ died for him, to take away his sins? No one can believe such an absurdity who exercises his reason at all. No, the use of faith is just that a man, by knowing the actual state of God's feelings towards him, by knowing the reality and intensity of His forgiving love to him, may have perfect confidence in God, and thus that his heart may open and let God's living Spirit enter. Now, what is it that makes man distrust God? What is it that makes a man start at the idea of "this night thy soul shall be required of thee"? What is it but the witness of conscience telling him that he has deserved and incurred God's anger and condemnation? And what is it that can do away this distrust? Nothing but the authentic information that God has forgiven him. The belief of this information as written in the death and resurrection of Christ is the faith of the gospel; and the use of it is, that it makes the character of God the ground of confidence. If the confidence is not produced, nothing at all is gained for the man, and the information of God is evidently rejected; for the belief of that would have given confidence, and was intended just for that end.

My distrust of God arises not from the belief that another

person is under condemnation, but from the apprehension of my own condemnation, and therefore my confidence is restored, not by the belief of the pardon of another person, but from the belief of my own pardon. Any faith short of this is a faith below man's need, as it is a faith below God's testimony. Any faith which is not personal confidence appears to me a mere fallacy. I have precisely the same authority and obligation for believing that Christ died because I had sinned, and rose again because I was pardoned, that I have for believing that He died and rose at all. The Bible goes upon this ground, that no man ever did, or ever could perform one act of obedience to God until he believed that his sins were forgiven him. Till a man knows himself pardoned, he will work for his pardon, he cannot help doing it. And so when God calls on him to work for God, to love God, to glorify God, He tells him at the same time, "You need not work for pardon any more, for I have pardoned you. Now you may work for God." It is thus that self is destroyed. A man who is working for pardon appears religious, and is thought religious by the world; but it is just the religion of self as much as if he were working for £1000. Will you compare the 32d Psalm with 2 Cor. v. 19? To every man the word of reconciliation declares the same thing, viz., that God is not imputing sin unto him; but it is only the man who believes it who tastes the blessedness of it. It is only he who knows God as his hiding-place. It is only he whose ear is opened to hear God's voice saying, "I will teach thee," etc. My beloved Rachel, I feel this most deeply interesting. . . . . May the Spirit of holiness and of power accompany it.

45. TO DR CHALMERS.

LINLATHEN, 20*th October* 1829.

MY DEAR SIR,—You know that I consider the proclama-

tion of pardon through the blood of Christ, as an act already passed in favour of every human being, to be essentially the gospel. I consider this to be the only gospel, because this is the only intelligence the belief of which will immediately give peace to creatures under condemnation, when they know their true condition. When it is supposed that the pardon is not passed into an act in favour of any individual until he believes it, no one can have peace from the gospel until he is confident that he is a believer; and further, his attention is entirely or chiefly directed to that quality of belief in himself which entitles him to appropriate the pardon to himself, so that his joy is not in God's character but in his own. You object to all this by asking me, "Where is the pardon if the man continues an unbeliever to the end?" Now, my dear and much respected friend, I think that I distinctly see the answer to this in the Word of God, and I pray God that He may cause you to see it also. It is this. The penalty pronounced against Adam's race at the fall was death, or the separation of the soul and body. There is no more said of it in the Bible. The death temporal, spiritual, and eternal is an invention of man; death spiritual is just sin, for it is the shutting out of God from the heart, who is the only true life, and therefore it is as improper to say that death spiritual is the punishment of sin, as to say that sin is the punishment of sin. Under the Adamic dispensation there is no other punishment mentioned in the Bible than death. Whilst therefore this penalty of the broken law lay upon man, no human being could rise again—that penalty must have lain upon him like a weight keeping him in his grave, and the rising of any human being is a proof of the removal of the penalty in regard to him. But we are informed that every human being is to rise again, unbelievers as well as believers; that is to say, all men are to be delivered from this penalty or

curse of the broken law. How is this? "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive," 1 Cor. xv. 22. "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life," Rom. v. 18. "And for this cause He is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance," Heb. ix. 15. All are redeemed from the penalty of the law, and the act by which they have been redeemed is an act in which God's character is so manifested, that the soul which sees it lives by it, *i.e.* receives the eternal life which was in the Father and was manifested in the Son, even that eternal life which consists in knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. The soul which believes not in this act which manifests God's holy love is guilty of refusing the testimony of God concerning His Son, and shuts out the eternal life, and falls under the sentence of the second death—second, because the first death is done away.—Yours most affectionately,

T. Erskine.

46. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

Cadder, 1*st February* 1830.

My dear Friend and Cousin,—It has pleased God to take our beloved friend and brother Charles Stirling to Himself. And it pleased God also of His abundant grace to make this scene of death a glorious victory. From the beginning of his illness he anticipated the result, and he welcomed it as his Father's summons calling him home. God did great things for him, and during the last days

of his life, whilst the struggle was going on, the Good Shepherd never left him for a moment. I was with him the last two days, and heard him say many sweet things, which are now like balm to poor Christian's heart. He said often, "Beloved and glorious Redeemer." "No perplexity, no alarm." "I see the splendour before me." "Oh that He should have done this for such a worm as I am!" Once he said, "This is a sweet dispensation, is not it?" But it is impossible to convey by words any idea of the peace and willingness and childlike confidence which every look and every tone of his voice expressed. This is the Lord's doing, and He is very gracious to Christian also. He has given her songs in this affliction. He has constrained her heart to give Him thanks and praise for the wonderful works which He hath wrought for lost sinners. She is much exhausted, however, for she never left his bed for a minute. My dear friend, we have a God in whom we may well rejoice; a just God, and yet a Saviour. Blessed be His glorious name for ever and ever. Charles said once, "You see in me what sin has done, and what the Saviour has done." It is right that a world of sin should be a world of sorrow, and God is glorified by bringing light out of the creature's darkness, and holiness out of the creature's pollution. . . .—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

47. TO CAPTAIN JAMES STIRLING.

CADDER, 1*st February* 1830.

MY DEAR JAMES,—You have before this heard of the death of beloved Charles. He died the death of the righteous, giving glory to God—not of constraint, but willingly. He saw the whole truth fully and distinctly, and rejoiced in it. Davie and I arrived here at four o'clock on Friday morning, and he survived till Saturday night, between nine and ten. He gave us a loving and cheerful

welcome; he told us that his soul was full of peace and joy in the Lord, that God was all light, and no darkness at all; he then said to me, "It has just come to me like a flash of light that you were right about these things;"[1] and then, turning to Christian, he said, "And James and Mary spoke a great deal about it to us also." God thus put a testimony into His servant's heart and mouth at that solemn moment; and I trust that dear Christian has it fully in her heart too. She told me just now, when I was up with her by her bedside (where she is lying very weak), that her eye never lost sight of Christ, and that her peace and even rejoicing had never failed. Blessed be God who giveth the victory, and who always maketh those who trust in Him to triumph. It was most edifying to see how his sense of the evil of sin grew upon him, without ever shaking his perfect confidence in the redeeming work of Christ. It was indeed a scene most glorifying to God. You will rejoice Eliza's heart by telling her these things.

Behold what manner of love the Father hath showed us. I have had some sweet views of the Creator manifested in the Redeemer; and I have tasted the grace of God in that "God has so loved the world," etc.—Farewell, my dear brother in Jesus; give my Christian love to Eliza.

T. ERSKINE.

48. TO MRS. MACHAR.[2]

EDINBURGH, *7th July* 1830.

I AM going to Helensburgh to-morrow, with the view of

[1] The universality of the atonement, etc.

[2] The daughter of a minister of an adjoining parish, who, in 1829, came to reside in the immediate vicinity of Linlathen. Mr. Erskine had ministered great comfort to her in a season of great distress. A mutual and strong attachment was formed which lasted for life, unbroken by the circumstance that in 1832 Miss Sim married the Rev. John Machar, D.D., Minister of Kingston, and removed with him to Canada, where she has ever since resided.

being present when Mr. Campbell preaches before the Presbytery on Thursday. May he be given a mouth and wisdom by the Holy Ghost! I have been seeing much more into the character of our present dispensation, our supply as the groundwork of future judgment. The supply is God's forgiving love and favour. This belongs to each one of us. In this time, which is the accepted time and day of salvation, we are dealt with not according to what we are, but according to what Christ our Head, the Head of every man, is. But when the judgment comes we shall be dealt with according to what we shall then be in ourselves. And thus that favour which is upon every man now, if not received into him so as to become his life, will be his condemnation.—Yours, etc., T. ERSKINE.

49. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

14 ROYAL CRESCENT, 16*th July* 1830.

DEAREST COUSIN RACHEL,—I know that Davie has written to tell you how the Lord ordered things, and permitted things on the occasion of Mr. Campbell's preaching before the Presbytery. You would be much struck with this thing in particular, that they had left all general charges against Mr. Campbell, and fixed on one point, and that point the love of God in Christ to every man. The expressions which they animadverted on were, "That the agony of Christ expressed the measure of the love of God to every man," and "that no man could act as a peacemaker between God and man, who could not tell man that God had made peace with him." They have entered it into their record that they regard these statements with abhorrence and detestation.[1] Jehovah is God and not

1 "We have learned that the Presbytery, by a great majority, recorded their detestation and abhorrence of the doctrine contained in two sentences in the sermon, which we believe are to the following purport:

man, therefore are we not consumed. He loves these men with a love that seeks to enter into them, and to make them the habitation of God through the Spirit. He loves them with a love that has brought Him into the flesh to taste death for them, that He might destroy in them the works of him who had the power of death, even the devil. . . .

'God loves every child of Adam with a love the measure of which is to be seen in the agonies of Christ,' and that 'the person who knows that Christ died for every child of Adam is the person who is in the condition to say to every human being, Let there be peace with you, peace between you and your God.'"—*The Whole Proceedings in the case of the Rev. John M'Leod Campbell*, pp. xix., xx. The two sentences are given in almost exactly the same words in the "Notes of a Sermon preached in the Parish Church of Row on Thursday, being the day of the Visitation of that Parish by the Presbytery of Dumbarton, by the Rev. J. M. Campbell. Taken in short-hand. Greenock, 1830." Pp. 23 and 25. These two sentences formed one of the counts in the libel.

CHAPTER VII.

The Spiritual Gifts—Letters from 1830 till 1835.

In a cottage at the head of the Gareloch, Isabella Campbell had lived that saintly life told with such beauty and pathos by her devoted pastor, the late Mr. Story of Roseneath. Her death had made her home at Fernicarry a shrine of resort to which the pilgrim steps of many were directed, who gathered round her sister Mary, upon whom the mantle of the departed seemed to have fallen. One Sunday evening in the end of March 1830, as Mary lay in weakness upon a sofa, suffering apparently under the same disease which had carried her sister to the grave, whilst those around her were praying for the restoration of the gifts bestowed upon the primitive Church, suddenly, as if possessed by a superhuman strength, she broke forth, speaking in an unknown tongue, in loud ecstatic utterances, for more than an hour.

On the other side of the Clyde, opposite the Gareloch, lay the town of Port-Glasgow. A family of the name of Macdonald was living there at this time; James and George, twin brothers, with their sisters. Two years before, the brothers, shipbuilders, staid and orderly men, had become exceedingly devout. Their religion was of a quiet and unobtrusive type. "Their doctrinal knowledge was at first very limited. They procured no religious books, for years they scarcely read one; the ministry under which

they sat was unimpressive, and if they did adopt peculiar views of divine truth, it was from no heretical writings or preaching, but from the Bible alone that they derived them. For instance, although they soon became classed among the disciples of Mr. Irving, who at that time was beginning to be stigmatised as heretical, the fact was that, so far as I can ascertain, they never read a single volume of his, or at least not for years after their own views were established. And although after a time they began to attend the preaching of the Rev. Mr. Campbell of Row, it was because they had previously been taught of God the same truths, and were attracted to Row by their love of them. . . . Until the eve of the miraculous manifestations in them, the subject of spiritual gifts did not at all occupy their attention, much less their expectations and desires; nor did it even when their prayers, in common with those of other Christians, for an outpouring of the Spirit, began to be answered by the pouring out of a very extraordinary if not marvellous spirit of prayer upon themselves."[1] In March 1830 an event occurred in this family which one of the sisters thus describes: "For several days Margaret had been so unusually ill that I quite thought her dying, and on appealing to the doctor he held out no hope of her recovery unless she were able to go through a course of powerful medicine, which he acknowledged to be in her then case impossible. She had scarcely been able to have her bed made for a week. Mrs. —— and myself had been sitting quietly at her bedside, when the power of the Spirit came upon her. She said, 'There will be a mighty baptism of the Spirit this day,' and then broke forth in a most marvellous setting forth of the wonderful work of God; and as if her own weakness had

[1] *Memoirs of James and George Macdonald of Port-Glasgow*, by Robert Norton, M.D., pp. 58, 59, 78.

been altogether lost in the strength of the Holy Ghost, continued with little or no intermission for two or three hours in mingled praise, prayer, and exhortation. At dinner-time James and George came home as usual, whom she addressed at great length, concluding with a solemn prayer for James, that he might *at that time* be endowed with the power of the Holy Ghost. Almost instantly, James calmly said, 'I have got it!' He walked to the window, and stood silent for a minute or two. I looked at him, and almost trembled, there was such a change upon his whole countenance. He then, with a step and manner of the most indescribable majesty, walked up to Margaret's bedside, and addressed her in these words, 'Arise and stand upright.' He repeated the words, took her by the hand, and she arose."[1]

The same evening James wrote to Fernicarry. Let Mary Campbell herself tell us of what happened on the receipt of this letter: "I had scarcely read the first page when I became quite overpowered, and laid it aside for a few minutes; but I had no rest in my spirit until I took it up again and began to read. As I read, every word came with power, but when I came to the command to arise, it came home with a power which no words can describe; it was felt to be indeed the voice of Christ; it was such a voice of power as could not be resisted. A mighty power was instantaneously exerted upon me. I first felt as if I had been lifted up from off the earth, and all my diseases taken off me. At the voice of Jesus I was surely made in a moment to stand upon my feet, leap and walk, sing and rejoice. O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, for His wonderful works to the children of men."[2]

[1] *Memoirs of James and George Macdonald of Port-Glasgow*, by Robert Norton, M.D., pp. 107, 108.

[2] *A Vindication of the Religion of the Land*, etc., by the Rev. A. Robertson of Greenock, pp. 251, 254.

After her recovery Mary Campbell lived during the summer of 1830 at Helensburgh. There meetings innumerable were held, manifestations extraordinary were made. To the speaking was now added writing in the unknown tongues. When the moment of inspiration came Mary seized the pen, and with a rapidity "like lightning" covered sheets of paper with characters believed to be letters and words. The gift of prophecy too was largely exercised. a gift not to be confounded with foretelling of future events or ordinary Christian teaching, but consisting in inspired exalted utterances, opening up some obscure passage of Scripture, or enforcing some neglected duty, or breaking forth ecstatically into prayer and praise. Crowds gathered round the young attractive rapt enthusiast. "Among their number," says one who wrote in the midst of the excitement, "they can reckon merchants, divinity students, writers to the Signet, advocates. . . . I have known gentlemen who rank high in society come from Edinburgh, join in all the exercises, declare their implicit faith in all Mary Campbell's pretensions, ask her concerning the times and seasons, inquire the meaning of certain passages of Scripture, and bow to her decisions with the utmost deference as those of one inspired by Heaven."[1]

From Edinburgh, Dr. Chalmers wrote to his friend Mr. Story of Roseneath, eagerly asking information, desiring especially to have a copy of some of the writing in the alleged unknown tongue. Mr. Story, in order to supply himself with the required information, paid a special visit to Mary Campbell. "I had just taken her by the hand," he writes to Dr. Chalmers, "to bid her adieu, when, obviously possessed by some irresistible power, she uttered for, I should suppose, nearly an hour, sounds altogether new to

[1] *A Vindication of the Religion of the Land*, etc., by the Rev. A. Robertson of Greenock, p. 311.

my ear, but which seemed certainly to be language. . . . I recognise in none (of the written characters) the signs of any language I know, but many have seen her note them down, and it is with inconceivable rapidity, and as if she herself were unconscious of the exertion. Both in speaking and in writing she describes her words and movements as in every respect independent of her own volition. . . . The greater jealousy manifested by you and others the more will you serve the interests of truth, and the more I am persuaded you will be prepared to conclude that these things are of God and not of men."[1]

In Port-Glasgow the area of manifestation was enlarged. The gift of interpretation was added to that of the tongues. By both the Macdonalds these two gifts were in constant exercise. They were bestowed also upon others. Prophetic utterances abounded. The excitement grew, the visitors from a distance increased. "Ever since Margaret was raised and the gift of tongues given," writes one of the sisters (May 18th, 1830), "the house has been filled every day with people from all parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland." Special interest was awakened where special hopes in this direction had for some time been cherished. Five delegates came down from London, who stayed three weeks at Port-Glasgow, and had every opportunity of seeing all that was going on, and of becoming personally acquainted with those engaged in it. One of these, a solicitor, recognised and quoted as an entirely competent witness by the writer of an article in the *Edinburgh Review*,[2] closes his description of what he witnessed thus :—

[1] *Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Robert Story*, pp. 209-211. Two years afterward Mr. Story, like Mr. Erskine, saw reason to think differently ; see pp. 213-224.

[2] "Pretended Miracles—Irving, Scott, and Erskine." First article in No. 106 of the *Edinburgh Review*, June 1831.

"These persons, while uttering the unknown sounds, as also while speaking in the Spirit in their own language, have every appearance of being under supernatural direction. The manner and voice are (speaking generally) different from what they are at other times, and on ordinary occasions. This difference does not consist merely in the peculiar solemnity and fervour of manner (which they possess), but their whole deportment gives an impression, not to be conveyed in words, that their organs are made use of by supernatural power. In addition to the outward appearances, their own declarations, as the declarations of honest, pious, and sober individuals, may with propriety be taken in evidence. They declare that their organs of speech are made use of by the Spirit of God; and that they utter that which is given to them, and not the expressions of their own conceptions, or their own intention. I had numerous opportunities of observing a variety of facts fully confirmatory of this.

"In addition to what I have already stated, I have only to add my most decided testimony, that, so far as three weeks' constant communication, and the information of those in the neighbourhood, can enable me to judge (and I conceive that the opportunities I enjoyed enabled me to form a correct judgment), the individuals thus gifted are persons living in close communion with God, and in love towards Him and towards all men; abounding in faith and joy and peace; having an abhorrence of sin, and a thirst for holiness, with an abasement of self, and yet with a hope full of immortality such as I never witnessed elsewhere, and which I find nowhere recorded but in the history of the early church: and just as they are fervent in spirit, so are they diligent in the performance of all the relative duties of life. They are totally devoid of anything like fanaticism or enthusiasm, but on the contrary are persons of great simplicity of char-

acter and of sound common sense. They have no fanciful theology of their own: they make no pretensions to deep knowledge: they are the very opposite of sectarians, both in conduct and principle: they do not assume to be teachers: they are not deeply read, but they seek to be taught of God in the perusal of and meditation on his revealed Word, and to 'live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.'"[1]

Mr. Erskine followed in the track of these delegates from London, staying no less than six weeks in the house of the Macdonalds, witnessing the manifestations and taking part in the daily prayer-meetings. A misrepresenting rumour as to what had happened at one of these meetings having reached his ears, he sent the following letter to his brother-in-law:—

50. TO CAPTAIN PATERSON.

9 BRANDON STREET, 15*th October* 1830.

THE account given by Mr. C. of the prayer-meeting at Port-Glasgow during which the words *disco capito* were used and interpreted is very incorrect.

The facts, as far as I can recollect, are these:—I had been present along with you at one of these meetings before, and we had been both much impressed with the supernatural character of the prayers as well as of the speaking with tongues. In conversing on the subject next day, you remarked to me that there had been, on the preceding evening, a neglect of the Scripture directions for the exercise of the gift of tongues, and in proof of it you pointed out the rule, 1 Cor. xiv. 28, "If there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church."

When I returned to Port-Glasgow I mentioned this to them, and their answer was that as interpretation had in

[1] Norton's *Memoirs*, pp. 146-148.

some cases been given, they considered themselves permitted to use the tongue when the Spirit gave them utterance, on the faith that interpretation would also be given. They said also that they felt it to be their duty to pray much for interpretation, according to that word, "Let him that speaketh in a tongue pray that he may interpret." Just before the meeting commenced we were conversing on this subject, so that it was impressed on the minds of those persons who spoke in prayer.

It was a very remarkable meeting. There was a manifestation of the presence and supernatural working of the Spirit of God beyond anything that I had witnessed. The voices struck me also very much, perhaps more than the tongues. It was not their loudness, although they were very loud, but they did not sound to me as if they were the voices of the persons speaking; they seemed to be uttered through them by another power.

After J. Macdonald had prayed a considerable time, first in English and then in a tongue, the command to pray for interpretation was brought to his mind, and he repeated—"It is written, 'Let him that speaketh in a tongue pray that he may interpret.'" He then prayed for interpretation with great urgency, until he felt that he had secured the answer and when repeating over the concluding words of what he had spoken in the tongue, which were "*disco capito*," he said, "And this is the interpretation: the shout of a King is amongst them." The impression which I received from this was, that the passage spoken in the tongue had concluded with the prophecy of Balaam, in which these words occur. I conceived that the words *disco capito* meant simply the shout of a King, and that they, along with their interpretation, had been given to us as words of reference, directing us to the beautiful passage of which they form a part, Numbers xxiii. 19, 20, 21.

I am quite sensible, as you must be after what you have witnessed, that it is impossible to convey in words any idea of what took place that evening. Though there had been no new tongue spoken, the supernatural character of the meeting would have been just the same; the tongues scarcely added to it at all.

Some time after, in conversing over the proceedings of the evening with one of the Macdonalds, I remarked to him that I had observed after the conclusion of the meeting two of the females apparently in great joy embracing each other, and I asked him if he knew any particular cause for it. He told me that for some days back their meetings had been remarkably dead, and thus there had been a great deal of prayer on the subject, and that these two persons had, especially in the forenoon, been much engaged in prayer together about it, and that the outpouring which had taken place that night bore to them a more decided character of being an answer to prayer, inasmuch as they had particularly asked of God "that the shout of a King might once more be amongst them." One of these females was his own sister.

He did not tell me this of himself. I asked him the explanation of the circumstance I have mentioned, which was of the most unobtrusive nature possible, and which indeed was done in a corner, and he answered me most simply; and I felt my own astonishment not a little rebuked by his quiet reception of this direct and literal answer to prayer, as a thing to be at all times confidently looked for.

I gave this history in Mr. C.'s hearing, explaining at the same time my reason for doing so, viz., I thought that those who recognised the moral integrity of the parties would in this remarkable coincidence recognise something supernatural, and that those who had formed no opinion as to

their integrity, either on one side or another, would from this case feel that the charge of imposture against them involved in it the charge of such a multiplication of fraud and of blasphemous lying against the Holy Ghost that it was really difficult to believe that any creatures could be so abandoned as to be guilty of it.

There are some things so bad that one would require tolerably strong evidence for their authenticity before believing them. And surely this is one.

Mr. Erskine's immediate convictions and impressions were embodied in a tract, "On the Gifts of the Spirit," published at Greenock at the close of 1830. "Whilst I see nothing in Scripture against the reappearance, or rather the continuance, of miraculous gifts in the Church, but a great deal for it, I must further say that I see a great deal of internal evidence in the west country to prove their genuine miraculous character, especially in the speaking with tongues. . . . After witnessing what I have witnessed among those people, I cannot think of any person decidedly condemning them as impostors, without a feeling of great alarm. It certainly is not a thing to be lightly or rashly believed, but neither is it a thing to be lightly or rashly rejected. I believe that it is of God."

Still more fully did Mr. Erskine deal with the whole topic of the gifts of the Spirit in the volume published in 1831, entitled "The Brazen Serpent, or Life coming through Death:" not the most popular of his writings, yet the one which goes most fully and deeply into doctrinal theology. It was to this book, even more than to the one on "The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel," that Mr. Maurice was in the habit of expressing his indebtedness. In its second chapter will be found the seeds of many of those ideas as to the moral character of the atonement, and

the manner of its operation in the formation of Christian character, which, transplanted to other soil and subject to other treatment, germinated after fashions not altogether such as the first sower relished. In this volume, after stating at length the scriptural grounds on which it might be concluded that the miraculous gifts were "the permanent endowment of the Church," and that "had the faith of the Church continued pure and full these gifts of the Spirit would never have disappeared," he says, "The world dislikes the recurrence of miracles. And yet it is true that miracles have recurred. I cannot but tell what I have seen and heard. I have heard persons, both men and women, speak with tongues and prophesy, that is, speak in the spirit to edification, exhortation, and comfort."[1]

In 1832 his faith in the reality of some at least of the Port-Glasgow manifestations remained unshaken, as appears from the following letter to Dr. Chalmers :—

51. TO DR. CHALMERS.

24 DRUMMOND PLACE, *May* 1832.

DEAR SIR,— . . . Feeling as I do the vast importance of the subject of our conversation the other evening, I cannot go through the common form of forwarding you this note without referring you to some of the passages of Scripture at least which belong to that subject.

Our Lord is especially designated by all the Evangelists as "He who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Compare this title with Acts i. 4-8, that you may be convinced that the gift of the Holy Ghost does not mean regeneration, but that which was manifested on the day of Pentecost—for the disciples were already regenerate persons. Compare it also with Ephesians iv. 8-16, where the purpose of the gifts is declared to be—not to give a miraculous attes-

[1] *The Brazen Serpent*, p. 203. See Appendix, No. II.

tation to the doctrines, but—to edify the body and preserve unity, and the duration of them is declared to be "until we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." You yourself remarked that evening that the promise of the Spirit was prominently held forth through the New Testament as the great characteristic and privilege of our dispensation, as in Mark xvi. 17, and that this promise is never recalled, nor, I may add, is any cessation of it hinted at, except in 1 Cor. xiii. 8-10, where these gifts are promised to endure until that which is perfect is come.

You said that the sanctification of the heart is a greater manifestation of the power of the Spirit in man than any miracles. To this I cordially agree. "The greatest of these is charity,—the more excellent way;" but the gifts are not reckoned of as substitutes for that chief end, but as means to it. And if the Lord gives these things as means, surely it is not a genuine humility which says, "I am satisfied without them." When the Lord desired Ahaz to ask a sign, he answered, "I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord," but he is severely rebuked for this apparent humility, Isaiah vii. 12, 13.

The 14th and 15th verses of the fourth chapter of Ephesians are very remarkable. One of the objects to be answered by the setting of the gifts in the Church is there said to be, "that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ." There must be some principle of unity in a church, in order to the existence of a church. God's scheme for this unity is the manifestation of the gifts; man's scheme

in the absence of the gifts is a Confession of Faith. We must either have the one or the other in order to keep the Church together. Now, is it the sin of the Church, or only her misfortune, that she is without the gifts, and therefore obliged to have recourse to a Confession for the purpose of unity? Surely the Westminster divines did not exhaust the Bible; and if they had the Spirit, surely the divines of our day are not excluded from the Spirit, and if so, they ought to thank God for what light was seen before, and press on to further light in the strength of the Spirit. If it be the sin of the Church to be without the gifts, then the necessity of the Confession is a sinful necessity, and ought not to be pleaded against any man who appeals to the Word and the interpretation of the Spirit.

I pray you to forgive this letter, if you think that it needs forgiveness. It is the principle in the Scripture that I press, not the particular instances, though I have the fullest conviction of the reality of several of them.

Again I say, forgive what seems to you to need forgiveness in this letter, and believe me to be, with true respect and affection, yours sincerely, T. ERSKINE.

The chief theatre of the supernatural manifestations had by this time shifted from the west of Scotland to London. With the change of place there came a change of their phase and office. They were no longer regarded, as at the first, simply or mainly as supernatural exhibitions of the Divine presence, expressions of the Divine will, intended to infuse fresh life and fervour into the faith and worship of the Church. To quote from a book of much ability, held in high repute among the members of the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church:—"By repeated words it was gradually made clear that what the Lord meant to show was that the only remedy for the evil condition of the Church universal,

which we had so much lamented, was the restoration of the form and order of the Christian Church as one body, as originally constituted, with the ordinances of that body,—the long-lost means of unity and channels of truth, viz., apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors."[1] Slowly, out of that strange confusion which disturbed at first the worship of the church in Regent Square, at command of those strange voices before which the grand humble heroic spirit of Edward Irving bowed and was broken, the form and order of the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church arose—a Church eclectic in doctrine, charitable in spirit, devout in worship, utterly refusing to be called a new branch or sect, yet claiming to be the one and only existing Christian society fashioned in all respects after that perfect model said to be set up in the Jewish Tabernacle and the Apostolic Constitutions. This was not "the healing of the hurt" which Mr. Erskine had been looking for with such intense anxiety and eager hope. And the more that this new remedy revealed of its character and the manner of its working, the more inclined was he to doubt and distrust its efficacy.

It is evident from the following letters to Lady Elgin, who became a member of the new society, that already in the spring of 1833 he had detected what appeared to him a fatal flaw in that society. At the same time his confidence in the heavenly origin of the gifts was otherwise shaken, so that before the end of that year he had to announce to his dear cousin Rachel a change of belief regarding them.

52. TO LADY ELGIN.

EDINBURGH, *Saturday.*

DEAR LADY ELGIN,—The distinction which Mr. Bruce

[1] *The Purpose of God in Creation and Redemption*, p. 163.

draws between a dispensation of principles and a dispensation of statutes is exactly the distinction which I was desirous of pointing out to you as existing between the dispensation of Christ and the dispensation of ἄγγελοι (Hebrews i. and ii.) The dispensation of Christ embraces in it a oneness with the mind of God—not merely a readiness to do His will when we know it, but a participation in His mind, so that, by a participation in the Divine nature, we enter into the reasons of His will, and do not merely obey the authority of His will. If I had a person living in the house with me, so gifted by God that, when he was asked whether the will of God were so or so in any case, he always returned an answer of truth in the power of the Spirit, I should in such circumstances have it always in my power to know the will of God, and I might continually obey it in the spirit of ready submission; and yet I should be living in the low dispensation of angels or statutes, and out of the dispensation of the Son or of principles, if this were my only way of learning the will of God. And if I were without this apparent privilege, and though I often mistook the will of God, yet if my imperfect and defective knowledge and obedience arose from an inward light, by which I saw the rightness of a thing as God sees it, then, though my outward manifestation of God would be much less in this case than in the former, yet my real manifestation of Him would be much greater, and I should be living in the dispensation of the Son and of principle, and not of messengers and of statutes.

There is an expression which I have been in the use of applying to the Christian religion, which corresponds exactly to this distinction of principles and statutes, viz., that it is a religion of centres, and not of circumferences. There is a seed of God in the man, which he may cultivate

or neglect. It is manifest that if I were living with such an oracular person as I have supposed, I should just be in the condition of the Jews with regard to Moses. Moses had met God, and they met Moses. I should be living under a messenger certified by God. I should have my circumference determined for me, and nothing would be left for my own perception.

In one of my letters to you, I remember applying this doctrine of principles and statutes to the two degrees of conscience. I think perhaps you may now see better what I meant by it; and by the remarks which I made on the two first chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The second degree of conscience is the real freeness of the will; for "if the Son make you free, you are free indeed."

53. TO LADY ELGIN.

LINLATHEN, 19*th April.*

DEAR LADY ELGIN,— . . . I may here mention what has struck me as to the nature of miraculous works generally. Look into the 4th of Exodus, and read there the account of the two first signs of which there is any record:—Moses' hand becoming leprous and then being cleansed, and his rod becoming a serpent and then returning into the form of a rod. In these two signs we have the history and the prophecy of the world:—1st, human flesh to be sown in corruption, and to be raised in incorruption—that is, the fall and the glorious restoration of man's nature, and 2d, the serpent gaining a terrible dominion over man, and then being overcome by man's hand. The prophetic part of these facts is that which I believe constitutes the true character of a sign, and that part is the cleansing of the flesh and the paralysing of the serpent. We have here the signs of Christ's kingdom—in the purity of the resurrection-body, and in the binding of Satan. Compare the

wondrous works of our Lord whilst on earth with these two. The fulfilment in reality of these two signs will be the realising of the 24th and 8th Psalms. I have misplaced them, for the serpent precedes the leprosy in the history, and it does so as the cause precedes the effect. These signs were types and prophecies of the kingdom, just as the sacrifices of the law were types and prophecies of the atonement. The miracles, as well as the sacrifices, are never final things; they do not terminate in themselves; they are signs of the kingdom. They are signs of that of which righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost are the reality. The attestation which they gave to God's messengers was that these messengers bore a message relating to the establishment of the kingdom. The raising of a dead man to life, if that man was to die again, was nothing at all to our intelligence except as a sign of permanent resurrection; and so the cure of sickness, etc. We are not to look for permanent cures then, or perfect cures, or cures in every case where they may be asked; their very nature as signs is inconsistent with this. In this day of grace the power of God's kingdom as manifested comes forth merely in signs; the real work of the day of grace is the spiritual cleansing—the kingdom of God within us. The sign refers us always to the coming kingdom, and thus any resting in the sign is a refusing of its true import. Holiness and love are no signs; they are the things themselves; they are the actual workings of that kingdom of which healings, etc., are the signs. The Sabbath was a prophetic sign of the coming Rest, and most of our Lord's wondrous works were done on that day to connect them with the same thing. His answer to John's disciples in the 7th of Luke, compared with Isaiah xxxv. 5, is very instructive. The prophecy was not then fulfilled, but there was a sign of its fulfilment given. This is an explanation to

my mind of many disappointments in the expectation of restoration of sick and dying persons. God would say to us, "The real miracle does not consist in patching up the old vessel, but in making it a new vessel; the patching up of the old vessel is but a sign, a prophetic sign, of the new creation. Don't lay such a stress upon the sign; you shall have the real everlasting cleansing of the leprosy." The dealings of God through Moses with Israel are a wonderful series of signs; they are the pattern of the heavenly real things. When Moses held the rod over the Red Sea, he was the sign of man holding up the serpent in triumph to the view of the creation, and in right of his victory exercising dominion, long lost but now recovered. That is still a prophecy. The final restoration is the purpose of Wisdom, and whatever be the means employed by the wisdom of God, this purpose of His wisdom is recognised by all her children: Wisdom is justified of her children. The power by which this is now carrying forward is the spirit of Christ in man's heart. This is the true preparation for the cleansing of the leprosy and the binding of Satan; and the signs are prophetic pictures to animate hope, and to indicate at the same time the actual presence and reality of that power which on the day of manifestation, when all things are ready, will come forth, not in signs but in permanent realities. I am happy you sent that letter to Lady Matilda. Any letter I send you, and which you think would interest her, you may most freely send to her. I appreciate your scrupulousness on that matter.

It is written, "Whosoever will do the will of God shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." This is the casting down of man's pride of independence; it is the same thing as that word, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

It is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness. Let us remember these things, and receive them as the wisdom and love of God to our souls. We are to receive nothing about God at second-hand. The serpent seduced man to go out of the limits of God's will in search of knowledge, and God would have us to know that it is only within those limits that we can have any true knowledge. We are creatures, and not independent.

I am happy to hear that your son's indisposition is removing. I can easily understand, from a few words which dropped from you incidentally as you were mentioning some conversation which had passed between you and him, that the relation in which you stand to each other is not common. An honest, unfettered, confiding intercourse between mother and son, on the great interests of man, is a blessing enjoyed by few mothers and few sons.

54. TO LADY ELGIN.

LINLATHEN, 16*th May* 1833.

DEAR LADY ELGIN,—There is a particular application of that subject on which I have written to you, which I wish to draw your attention to. The healing of diseases, whether by the manifest immediate agency of God, or by what we call natural means, is simply a sign of resurrection to come, and it is given not to rest in, but to nourish faith and hope; not to give a satisfaction in the flesh, but to give an encouragement to crucify the flesh now, through confidence in God, who by this sign shows His will and power to raise up in incorruptible immortality the flesh which has thus been willingly crucified during the day of grace. We all feel that we need a deliverance, and the flesh calls for it immediately, whilst those who walk in the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness. Thus the flesh would always convert the sign into the permanent miracle;

it cannot receive the truth that the promised deliverance is through blood, that is, through death. Our true deliverance is on the other side of death, and we must pass through death to get it. So our Deliverer is a crucified and risen man, and it is by this way that He leads many sons to glory. He is the way, and those who abide in Him are those who are dying daily to the flesh and present things, in the hope of the future glory, and in the sense of the righteousness of the condemnation which is laid upon the flesh—the idolatrous flesh. Every acting of the flesh is a seeking of gratification to itself on this side of death; it may acknowledge God as the giver of its happiness, or the guard of its happiness, but God is not its happiness Himself; as a man may look to the police of the town in which he lives as the protector of his happiness, but he has no happiness in the police; he would be happy to be able to do without it. This is idolatry; for that which is our happiness is really our God. And this will be the natural acting of the flesh until it is raised up a spiritual body. And therefore the life of holiness here is a life of hope of a future glory, a righteous kingdom to come, detaching us from the actings of the flesh and the power of seen things, and thus, by making us partakers of Christ's cross, fitting us to be partakers of His glory.

Whenever we think that we may innocently and safely take the natural desires for our guide, whenever we think that we may without sin and danger make the present gratification of the flesh our object, we are receiving that error which is condemned in 2 Timothy ii. 18, "saying that the resurrection is past already." Read the whole chapter carefully, and you will see that this is the spirit of it: it is not until the resurrection is really past, and these bodies have ceased to be bodies of sin and death, that we can safely cease from living by hope of good things to

come, and from crucifying the flesh through that hope. The condition of all men is represented by the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus, for all are upon the cross in one way or other—pain, anxiety, doubt, etc. etc.—and all men desire a deliverance; but some insist upon it now, others are content to wait: those who live in the flesh will have it immediately,—"If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." They have little taste for a crucified Saviour; for they think as the priests did, "If thou be the king of Israel, come down from the cross." They do not wish to be delivered from sin, they wish to be delivered only from the cross. But the other thief did not ask to be taken down from the cross; he felt the righteousness of the punishment: "We indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss;" and he was content to wait for deliverance until the coming of Christ's Kingdom,—"Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom." He made up his mind that he was to continue on the cross whilst he continued in the flesh; he felt that it was righteous, he knew that it was but for a very little while, and he saw an eternal weight of glory,—"joint heirs with Christ," if in suffering, so also in glory (Luke xxiii. 39-43, Rom. viii. 16-26). Popish penance is the mimicry of a root-truth. Look at the 13th verse of that chapter. It is through the Spirit that the flesh is to be crucified, through love of God and the hope of His Kingdom. . . .

There is another thing which I may mention to you. I think that there is a risk sometimes of losing hold of the great principle and kernel of prophecy through occupation with its details, although the opposite evil has certainly been the prevalent one in our days. Is it not the great object of prophecy that, through faith and hope of the glory of God, we should be content to forego present

things, and enter into God's plan of condemning and crucifying the flesh? "Heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together," seems to me the kernel of prophecy, like the object of healings, etc. . . .

The object of prophecy is to draw our view forward out of seen things to the permanent triumph of God's righteous cause. What I meant by the details of prophecy is rather when the prophecy is more considered than the thing prophesied, as when the sign is more considered than the thing signified. I feel a jealousy of the Morning Watch in this respect.

55. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

LINLATHEN, *Saturday*, 21*st Dec.* 1833.

BELOVED FRIEND,—My mind has undergone a considerable change since I last interchanged thoughts with you. I have seen reason to disbelieve that it is the Spirit of God which is in Mr. ——, and I do not feel that I have a stronger reason to believe that it is in others. This does not change my mind as to what the endowment of the Church is, if she had faith, but it changes me as to the present estimate that I form of her condition. God is our all, and having God, we have lost nothing. These gifts are but signs and means of grace; they are not grounds of confidence; they are not necessarily intercourse with God; they are not holiness, nor love nor patience; they are not Jesus. But surely they shall yet appear, when God has prepared men to receive them. Mr. and Mrs. Scott and Mrs. Rich are here. I have much sympathy with much that I meet in them. They fear that the outward forms and magnificent utterances have that in them from which the carnal mind draws nourishment, and that there is a temptation to put these things between God and the soul,

and to take them on trust that they are of God, although the hearer himself personally may not be conscious of meeting God in them. The truth and substance of religion is the spirit of Christ manifested in the heart, and consciously recognised in the heart, as the light and life of God communicated to us—the conscious possessing within our hearts that Seed of the woman, who bruises the serpent's head, and to whom all the promises of God are made.

You know that Mr. Scott is entirely separated from Mr. Irving and his church,[1] believing it, as I understand, to be a delusion partly, and partly a spiritual work not of God. He conceives that there is a disposition to yield to spiritual influence, as in animal magnetism, which lays one open to such possession: but don't say anything in his name, except that he is separate as not believing it. We are in the midst of unexplained things; but he that dwelleth in the

[1] Mr. Scott had early noticed a tendency in Mr. Irving with which he could not sympathise. "He had from the first," to quote Mr. Scott's own words, "a strength of ecclesiastical, I might say hierarchical, feeling, impossible with my convictions." This feeling was enlarged and deepened by his intercourse with several of the most eminent of the High Church clergy in London, whose sympathy with his prophetical views increased their attraction. It became dominant, and embodied itself in action as the new Church began to be organised. As things progressed in this direction Mr. Scott stood more and more aloof, doubting first, then disapproving, till the divergence between the two friends became extreme. To both this was singularly distressing. Scott's health gave way under it, "to such a degree," Mrs. Scott tell us, "that Mr. Irving sent for me, that I might be the bearer of the earnest expostulation he desired to send to his dear friend, and at the same time save him the greater excitement which their conversation then might occasion. It was the most solemn interview I ever had with any one, and in binding up in my own mind all that he desired me to be the messenger of to my husband I said, 'You believe that organisation produces life; Mr. Scott believes that life alone can organise: does this then express your great difference?' He assented. After an hour's audience, in which with awful but affectionate seriousness he stated to me what were my husband's heresies, I said, 'It is very clear to me that the antagonism of the two views is as the north to the south pole,—that they are totally and purely opposite.' He said, 'It is so. Mr. Scott or I am in dangerous error. The end will show.'"

secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. The true connection of man with the Spirit of God is seeking to know and do His will—"Yea, rather, blessed are they that know the will of God and do it." I cannot believe that there has been no pouring out of the Spirit at Port-Glasgow and in London; but I feel that I have to wait in every case upon the Lord, to receive in my heart directly from Himself my warrant to acknowledge anything to be of His supernatural acting, and I have erred in not waiting for this. . . .

56. TO LADY ELGIN.

LINLATHEN, 18*th March* 1834.

DEAR LADY ELGIN,—I know that you will not misinterpret my delay in answering you. I have often wished to do it, but have never been able; and even now, I do not feel that I am sitting down to answer your letter, but rather to thank you for it, and to express to you my sense of the Christian love breathing in it. I cannot answer it, because, as I have not in me a light which confirms it, so neither have I a light which distinctly condemns it altogether—I mean as to its recognition of the church in London to be indeed a church ordered and gifted by the Spirit; although I see much against believing it, which I shall mention. At the same time, my conscience responds fully to all that you say of the domestic order of the families of that church, and I enter into the distinction which you make between the general calls to general holiness and the special calls to the detailed duties of life connected with station and relation, so much pressed in that church; and I do feel that holiness consists in hearing Christ and following Him step by step in the minutest part of the minutest duty, and in acknowledging an ordinance of Christ in all the natural and social relations. And

I recognise such teaching to be according to the mind of God; and where I see the teachers of such things teaching by their lives, as well as by their words, I feel that they possess weighty credentials. And I feel that we need a church so ordered by the Spirit, and that we have it not. But even were all the teaching that came out from that church such as found a witness in my conscience, I require, besides that witness to the teaching, an equally distinct witness within me to the power whose utterances they follow, before I can feel myself warranted (or rather I should say capable) to receive it as the supernatural power of the Spirit of God, or to receive its ordering as the ordering of God. When I heard of the second mission of Messrs. Drummond, Cardale, Armstrong, and Thomson, from London, I went to Edinburgh. I remained there Thursday and Friday last week. There were two meetings on Thursday and one on Friday. Dr. Thomson came down as the instructor of Mr. Tait and his people as to the nature of the church. I heard him speak twice in the chapel, besides meeting him once (unintentionally) in private. I heard Mr. Armstrong preach once. I heard also several utterances through Mr. Cardale and Mr. Drummond, which were very striking, and to which, with two exceptions, my conscience witnessed fully; but whether the power by which they spoke was really the power of God or not, I feel myself perfectly incompetent to say. I have a witness within me which, I am conscious, tries truth; but I do not know a witness within me which tries power. I have once already yielded myself to the acknowledgment of a power, mainly on the credit of the truth uttered by the power, and I have felt that this was sin, and that it was laid upon me to take nothing as of God, except from Himself and in His own light. The utterances were very sweet and pleasing, even in rebuke, especially

through Mr. Drummond, whose finely modulated English voice contrasted, even to the natural man, most favourably with the harsh and distressing sounds which I have heard in that chapel before; but the shake which I have received on this matter is, I find, very deep; or rather it would be a truer expression of my feeling to say, that I am now convinced that I never did actually believe it. My conviction that the gifts ought to be in the church is not in the least degree touched; but a faith in any one instance of manifestation which I have witnessed, like the faith which I have in the righteousness and faithfulness of God, I am sure I have not, and never had, as far as I can judge on looking back—that is, the only true faith, even "the substance of things hoped for." I think that I mentioned to Lady Matilda at Cadder the circumstances which shook me with regard to the Macdonalds at Port-Glasgow, that in two instances when James Macdonald spoke with remarkable power, a power acknowledged by all the other gifted people there, I discovered the seed of his utterances in the newspapers. He had read there a foolish rumour about the time of George IV.'s death, that the Ministers would probably find it convenient to conceal that event when it took place, until they had made some arrangements. This had remained in his mind, and it came forth at last as an utterance in power, but wrapped in such obscurity of language as not to expose it to direct confutation; but on reading the paragraph I recognised such a resemblance that I could not doubt it, and I put it to him; and although he had spoken in perfect integrity (of that I have no doubt), yet he was satisfied that my conjecture as to its origin was correct. The other instance was a prophetic utterance of a war in the north of Europe—the language taken much from the 11th of Daniel; but the seed of it also was a newspaper paragraph. I thus see how things may come

into the mind and remain there, and then come forth as supernatural utterances, although their origin be quite natural. James Macdonald could not say that he was conscious of anything in these two utterances distinguishing them from all the others; he only said that he believed that these two were of the flesh. Taplin made a similar confession on being reproved through Miss Emily Cardale for having rebuked Mr. Irving in an utterance. He acknowledged that he was wrong; and yet he could not say where the difference lay between that utterance and any other. Is there not a great perplexity in all this? Does the control of a church solve it?

What I heard from Dr. Thomson, both in public and private, seemed to be at variance with all that I know and feel of the first elementary principle of true religion. In his zeal for a church, he seemed to me to lose sight of the individual personality of that intercourse with God through His Spirit within us, which is the basis, and the only basis, of religion. He frequently repeated that Christ was only to be met with in the church, and that the light in man *only* answered to the ministrations of the ordained ministers in the church. I know that this is not so. But if it were so, how could I even be in a condition to discern the true church? They say, "Come into the church and you will see." The first step, according to this direction, must be made in the dark. The first step is a *petitio principii*, a begging the question; it is taking for granted the very thing of which I need evidence: that this is the true church. I feel the desolateness of being without a church; I feel the weakness and meagreness, and selfishness and speculativeness, that arise from our isolated condition: but I dare take nothing for granted in this weighty matter, and I feel very jealous of the urgency with which the teachers of that church cry down the sovereignty of the

internal witness of the light in every man, and claim submission to themselves on the ground of utterances which need a further evidence, and which do not carry to my mind any character distinguishing them in kind from other utterances which have been manifested to be delusive. One of the two cases in which my heart gave no response to the utterance (I don't recollect whether through Mr. D. or Mr. C.) was, when a seal was given by it to Dr. Thomson's expression, "Christ is only to be met with in the church." I cannot know the true church without the true light, and if the true light does not guide me until I am in the church, and even then only under its ministrations, where is my guide to the true church? I do not wish to press their words beyond the meaning which they themselves attach to them. And they allow regenerating light before being in the church,—that men may be Christians out of the church. I know in some measure the evil of being without a church: but I feel that, if this were so in its full extent, I should be without a God. I cannot express to you how much I feel of atheism in putting anything, whatever its name may be, above or in place of the witness of God in my own heart, the true light which lighteth every man. . . .

I feel certain that the individual personality of religion is not to be lost or diminished, but strengthened and confirmed, by a church; and that it is by our connection with Christ that we are to be brought into a church, and not by our connection with a church that we are to be brought into Christ. We are commanded to prove all things, but we can only do this in the light of Him who is the true light enlightening us personally. And I am sure that we can escape from the ignorance and darkness which are upon us, only by keeping close to that light, and receiving instruction from without only as witnessed to by, and in

communion with, that light; for that light is also the True Life; and no instruction can be life to us, except as it is witnessed to and received by that life. Now it seems to me, that it is against this they teach. I know, indeed, that if the question were put to them, whether they would have a man to disregard the witness within him, they would say, No; and whether a man might not be a Christian out of their church, they would say, Yes; yet still they would have him come into their church, though he had no witness to its being the true one, and after he was in, they would have him trust the pastor and elders, even in opposition to the light within himself. I am sure that I do not wilfully misunderstand them, but what I have lately heard from them gives me always the impression that they regard the ordinances of the church rather as appointments and institutions of Christ, which are to be obeyed and reverenced and submitted to, and on account of obedience to which a blessing will be given, than as open channels through which the Spirit of the Head is to flow into us personally, and as meeting-places where we are continually to have personal contact with Him. I know that they would not allow this; but I daresay many Papists would not allow a similar charge against Popery. I feel as if there were a deep Popery in their system. Christ is the true Priest, because He does not stand between us and God, but we meet God in Him. That seems to me the true character of an ordinance. I see so much good and beauty in their order and teaching that I am afraid to reject their claims, and yet I feel also afraid that they are putting men and forms between God and the people. The charge which God by His prophets brings against His people in the last days is the taking His ordinances instead of Himself—see Isaiah i. and all through Jeremiah. They said not, "Where is Jehovah?" but "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord." I

feel that my part is to wait to be taught of God the meaning of 1 John iv. 2, 3. I cannot believe in its verbal interpretation notwithstanding the Probyn children, there are so many opposite facts. I desire to lie at the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him to be meek and lowly in heart; and not to refuse what He gives, and not to snatch at what His own hand does not give. I hope that I shall not be led to shut my ear against the true voice because I have been deceived by a false one; but I am bound to be on my guard. I believe that an evil spirit, or the flesh even, may speak of the deep things of God, although in a way that the true life and light in us might detect it, or at least guard us from suffering by it. Pray read the tractate in Penington on "laying the axe to the root," etc., page 184. There is a remarkable verse, which I once met on a remarkable occasion, that I would also refer you to—Ezekiel xxvii. 17. Tyrus may buy Judah's finest wheat; yea, her balm and oil and honey. What is the meaning of this? You would know what part of the parcel properly belonged to yourself. Those who are weary are apt to get impatient, and, in the absence of the sun, to kindle a fire and to compass themselves about with sparks; and in my weariness, which has been great, I have done this; but I am now learning that "all the days of the afflicted are evil;" but yet, in the midst of that evil, "the merry heart hath a continual feast" in eating the will of God.—Yours very truly, T. ERSKINE.

57. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

April 11, 1834.

DEAR FRIEND,—The Israelites were doomed to journey through the wilderness until all those who had rebelled against the Lord by refusing to go into the promised land died. That evil generation was just the type of the flesh,

which must be worn down and broken and wasted before we are meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Our carcases must fall in this wilderness, and the life which belongs to these carcases must be shed out either drop by drop or by effusion. This life is in the blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission—there is none. The life is in the blood, and the will is in the life; the rebellious, independent will of man must be shed out, for in it the fall consists, and in the shedding out of it redemption consists.

How often things appear to happen for no other end but to provoke and to distress, and, indeed, things do happen to consume and wear out the carcases that must fall in the wilderness. Until they fall we cannot enter into the promised inheritance, and this is the manner of our Father's love therefore—to consume and waste that which hinders our entering in; and in all that consuming and wasting and wearing out there is a love hidden, and that love, which is God's will in everything, and which is contained in everything that happens, as the kernel is contained in the shell, is the food which God giveth us that our souls may eat and live. This is the manna which is rained round our tents. The people, when they were desired to take it up and eat it, said, What is it? (for that is the meaning of *manna*): it did not seem to them to be bread from heaven, yet it was bread from heaven, though only the type of that true bread which our Father giveth us—the meat which Jesus ate, as He says—"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me." How often, when my Father has given me this meat to eat, have I said, What is it? Is this the bread of heaven? We would eat our own will—that is, the flesh-pot of Egypt—and God would have us eat His will, that we may be of one mind with Him, partaking of the Divine nature. Beloved friend, how much

easier it is to say this than to do it! But it is more sweet and more blessed to do it than to say it. It is an awful judgment—"Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant." I have often felt this judgment in my own heart; but I know that it is blessed in this day of grace to yield the heart to judgment, for thus it is prepared for the day of judgment, being already purged by the spirit of judgment. What a wonderful thing it is for poor weak worms of the dust to be invited to take hold of the will of God, and to make it their own will, and thus to be united to Omnipotence. This is the meaning of that word, "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." . . .

I have since heard from James Macdonald, Port-Glasgow, that the spirit amongst them had testified against the London mission, saying that "they were deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." . . . The blessing of the Lord be upon us all. The oneness of the opened ear and the prepared body is very striking: consider it in connection with John x. 14 and 15. We are all well—old and young—thanks to the Preserver.

58. TO THE REV. EDWARD IRVING.

LINLATHEN, 16*th Oct.* 1834.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—It is one thing for a man to have a light given him by which he may discern all things, and it is another thing for him to use that light. Man's responsibility consists in his having that light, and in his possessing the power of using it or of refusing to use it. For the true light is the light which lighteth every man, "and this is the condemnation, that that light hath come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light." This is the condemnation, the only condemnation,

and thus he that denies that light in man denies the only condemnation.

I never dreamt of limiting man's responsibility by his actual discernment; on the contrary, I desire, and have desired, to justify God in all the dark wanderings of man, by acknowledging that there is in each "man's hand a price to buy wisdom," and that no man needs to say, "Who shall ascend into heaven, or descend into the deep to bring Christ to him? for that the word is nigh him, in his mouth and in his heart, that he may hear it," Rom. x.; and when I said in my letter to you that men were often very loose in their profession of faith in the Bible, for that they did not truly believe in any truth of God which they had not been taught by the Spirit of God, I was in my mind referring to the 17th verse of that same tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where it is written, "Faith cometh by hearing, even hearing through the word of God," evidently pointing to that same word which is in the heart (mentioned in the 8th verse), and limiting the true meaning of faith to the witness of that inward word. The natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit, for no man understandeth the things of the Spirit but by the Spirit, and this is his sin, that he will still live on in the flesh, instead of living in the Spirit which God hath given to him in Jesus Christ. Do I say then that his ignorance of the things of God is his measure of responsibility? No! I justify God in saying that God hath given to him a spiritual light and life in his Son, whereby he may know and do the things of God, and therefore that his ignorance as well as his disobedience has sin in it. He may, however, in the midst of an entire want of spiritual teaching, have arrived at a conviction that the Bible is an inspired book, either by receiving it on the authority of those about him, or by his own historical

researches and reasonings thereon, and this he may consider faith, but surely you would consider it a contradiction to say that such a person could exercise faith, for faith "seeth Him who is invisible." He has not received God's witness in it, but man's or reason's; he has not received the witness which "is greater," and so he has not "the witness in himself." Surely his conviction, however conscientious, is not to be confounded with the spiritual faith of a child of God—his conviction is a carnal thing, for it does not see God, which is the true mark of Christian faith. "This is life eternal, when they know thee, the only true God." And how is He known but by faith? He that believeth hath life, just because faith sees and receives God. An unspiritual man cannot have faith in the Bible, just because he does not meet God in it. And in like manner a spiritual man has only true faith in that part of the Bible in which he sees and receives God. To confound these two beliefs is to confound the greater witness with the less. The fact of a man's being without the greater witness is no apology for his being without it, but it proves that he has not divine faith in the thing, for he that believeth hath the witness in himself.

Wherever I find the authority of God commanding or forbidding, although I may not enter into the spirit of the ordinance, I am bound to yield my submission; but in this case I am, from some carnality, shutting myself out from the liberty of children. Even so, as I recognise the Bible as a whole to be the inspiration of God, the want of the internal witness and light to any part of it does not lift me from under its obligation; but only I feel that in that part I am untaught and unprofited, although my Father gave it to me for teaching and profiting. I acknowledge its inspiration, but I am not receiving in that faith which is of the operation of the Spirit. But unless there be an

internal witness to the things of God in man, man can have no responsibility at all. . . . Is it on your authority that I am to risk my soul? You may speak a thing which I had never conceived, nor imagined, nor heard before; nay, it might be opposed to all my preconceived thoughts on the subject, and yet I may find a witness in me to it contending against all my own theories on the subject, and showing me a glory to God in it, which I cannot gainsay, so that I am compelled to acknowledge the word you have spoken as the word of God, quick and powerful. From whom do I receive this? Certainly not from you, nor on your authority, but through you. If I acknowledge the same word, not from the same inward witness to it, but because I believe you to be an ordained pastor, I get nothing that is quick and powerful; I receive it as a servant, not as a son; I get it not from God through you, but from you, and on your authority, as a recognised pastor of God's ordination. The faith of the Jews in the construction of the tabernacle was a very different faith from that which we are called to exercise, and very different from that which Abraham had in God, and which doubtless many of those who understood not the meaning of the tabernacle had in God. But for that outward second-hand faith they had an outward foundation in the miracles they saw. Now, you require this outward faith, but without any outward foundation. The patterns of the heavenly things could only be understood by those who knew the things of which they were the patterns, and the most absolute and unquestioning submission to these pattern ordinances was a very different thing from that faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." This is the faith of the new covenant; it is itself the grain of mustard-seed, the kingdom of heaven within. My dear friend, what I

feel in your letter is the entire annihilation by it of all true personal, spiritual religion or conscious communion with God. If man has not that in him by which that which comes from God can be distinguished from that which comes from another quarter, he is incapable of religion, and if men are to be taught not by the Spirit of God, but by a man, what is the use of your pressing on your people that they should not take their pastor as a substitute for Christ, or as a third party bearing a message to them from Him, but that they should meet Christ in their pastor! I conceive that this expression of meeting Christ in the pastor is susceptible only of two different meanings. The one meaning is that the people should look to their pastor as the Jews looked to their high priest, whether he was a man of God or not, yet as an ordinance of God to them, through whom they were to expect a blessing. This is, however, not properly meeting Christ, it is only meeting Christ's appointment; that is, it is meeting Christ's substitute, or a third party acting for Him, and there is no such thing recognised in the new covenant. The other meaning is, that the people should discern Christ's own teaching in the teaching of their pastor, by the Spirit's witness within them. The first of these meanings belongs to the patterns of the heavenly things; the second belongs to the heavenly things themselves, to that Church in which all are taught of God. I believe that you would take the first meaning; because I think that under spiritual names you are returning to the patterns, although you have none of those outward signs to show on which the authority of that outward Church was founded; and although your warning of the danger of taking the pastor as a substitute for his Lord appears so contradictory to it, God manifest in the flesh is no official or conventional thing, it is a blessed reality.

59. TO MISS STUART.

CADDER, *Saturday night, Dec.* 13, 1834.

YOU will have heard of the death of Irving. You cannot enter into my feelings on this event, as you did not know him or regard him as I did. He has been a remarkable man in a remarkable age. He was a man of much child-like feeling to God, and personal dependence on Him, amidst things which may well appear unintelligible and strange in his history.—Yours most truly, T. E.

60. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

6th Feb. 1835.

DEAR FRIEND.—James Macdonald is to be buried this day at one o'clock. This is another very solemn thing. I believe that to the very last he felt assured that the voice which spoke by him was the voice of the Spirit. He was a servant of Jesus Christ, and his trust and joy were in the Lord, and he was a witness for God. He died on Monday. I had a short letter from his brother telling me of it, and telling me that before his death, but when he felt its approach, he spoke to them many things which would be a consolation to them whilst their pilgrimage lasted. This event has recalled many things to my remembrance. I lived in the house with them for six weeks, I believe, and I found them a family united to God and to each other. James especially was an amiable and clean character—perfectly true.[1] And those manifestations which I have so

[1] George Macdonald died in the year following, and like his brother continued to the last in the assurance that the power by which the utterances was given was supernatural and divine. The narrative given by Dr. Norton of the last days of both brothers conveys a deep impression of the simplicity, humility, and fervour of their piety. That they both died in early manhood, of the same disease which carried off Isabella Campbell, may so far account for the peculiarly vivid and ecstatic form which their piety at times assumed.

often witnessed in him were indeed most wonderful things and most mighty, and yet—I am thoroughly persuaded—delusive. The partakers in these things are now dropping off, called one after another to give in their account. Dear Christian would have her history recalled vividly to her by the return of the season when the Lord took her husband to Himself, blessing his soul with His own blessed light, and blessing her by showing that He had thus blessed him. "It is all light to me, the dark valley."

The following Note was appended by Mr. Erskine to his treatise on Election, published in 1837 :—

"In two former publications of mine, the one entitled, *A Tract on the Gifts of the Spirit*,—the other, *The Brazen Serpent*,—I have expressed my conviction, that the remarkable manifestations which I witnessed in certain individuals in the West of Scotland, about eight years ago, were the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, of the same character as those of which we read in the New Testament. Since then, however, I have come to think differently, and I do not now believe that they were so.

"But I still continue to think, that to any one whose expectations are formed by, and founded on, the declarations of the New Testament, the disappearance of those gifts from the Church must be a greater difficulty than their re-appearance could possibly be.

"I think it but just to add, that though I no longer believe that those manifestations were the gifts of the Spirit, my doubts as to their nature have not at all arisen from any discovery, or even suspicion, of imposture in the individuals in whom they have appeared. On the contrary, I can bear testimony that I have not often in the course of my life met with men more marked by native simplicity and truth of character, as well as by godliness, than James

and George Macdonald, the two first in whom I witnessed those manifestations.

"Both these men are now dead, and they continued, I know, to their dying hour, in the confident belief that the work in them was of the Holy Ghost. I mention this for the information of the reader who may feel interested in their history, although it is a fact which does not influence my own conviction on the subject.

"To some it may appear as if I were assuming an importance to myself, by publishing my change of opinion; but I am in truth only clearing my conscience, which requires me thus publicly to withdraw a testimony which I had publicly given, when I no longer believe it myself."

With reference to this Note, Mr. Duncan of Parkhill, Arbroath—who was a chosen associate and friend of Mr. Erskine all through the period to which it refers—in a letter dated December 30th, 1876, says, "Looking into the Memorial of the Macdonalds brings many things vividly before me. Norton says they were gentlemanly men, which is most true; and what he says of George's face shining as you can believe Stephen's did, I once saw, when he was speaking in that power, when we were quite alone on the hill above Port-Glasgow, when I had made a remark on the beauty of the sun setting on the Clyde, and he broke out about the new heavens and the new earth. I could never agree with what Mr. Erskine said in his note, although I doubt not that their own spirits came in at times. From conversations with Mr. Erskine I am satisfied that he would have been glad that he had not said so much as he did say."

CHAPTER VIII.

Letters from 1834 till 1837.

EARLY in 1834 there arrived at Linlathen the portraits of Mr. Erskine of Cardross and his wife, Lady Christian, sent by their daughters Miss Rachel Erskine and her sister. Their receipt was thus acknowledged :—

61. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE AND HER SISTER.

LINLATHEN, 22*d April* 1834.

BELOVED FRIENDS,—I am very thankful for your love, and I can say that I could scarcely devise any expression of love more gratifying to me than these pictures. The most distinct feelings of veneration that I have ever experienced towards human beings are associated with those two portraits. I never saw anything in either of them that my heart ever ventured to blame; they stand in my memory in perfect purity, surrounded with an admiring love. I remember, when I heard of my uncle's death, I cried the whole day without any intermission. And though she died after my days of weeping were much past, yet she held her purity in the judgment of my heart—after that judgment had begun to venture to act on all, without respect of persons. Their memory is most sweet to me—far sweeter than all the genius of Raphael. And I know what a gift of affection it is from you, and of confidence; for you could not allow them to go anywhere but where you were sure

they would find reverence and love. They will find reverence and love from me, you may rest assured. . . .

In the autumn of the same year (1834) Mr. Erskine had the gratification of receiving the two following letters written on the same sheet of paper :—

LETTERS FROM MM. GAUSSEN AND ADOLPHE MONOD.

"LES GROTTES, *Mercredi*, 1 *Oct.* 1834.

"MON CHER FRÈRE,—Ayant eu la douceur de posséder quelques jours Adolphe Monod sous mon toit, j'ai désiré que deux amis qui aiment tant à reporter sur vous leurs conversations ne séparassent pas sans s'être eux-mêmes rappelés à vos prières et aux souvenirs de votre amitié chrétienne. (Il part demain matin.) Quant à moi, je puis vous dire combien souvent mes pensées me ramènent aux momens que j'ai passés avec vous depuis notre première prière à Royal Circus jusqu'à celle de notre séparation le 17 de Novembre dans l'hôtel de Glasgow. Je désire que tous ces souvenirs aussi se résolvent en prières et en actions de grâces devant Celui qui a prié pour nous le front contre terre. Je ne saurais vous exprimer, cher ami, avec quelle joie fraternelle j'ai ouï dire que votre foi était devenue plus simple, et que votre conversation, toujours pleine de sentiment, se reportait sur l'ensemble des vérités et des espérances de la foi, sans vous laisser aller à des présomptions qui en isolent quelques unes. Vous pourrez faire beaucoup de bien quand, avec les dons qui vous ont été confiés, vous vous attacherez humblement à développer l'une après l'autre les sentences du Saint Esprit, telles qu'elles se présenteront sous vos mains dans la Sainte Écriture, et sans vous embarrasser d'y établir ou d'y confirmer des systêmes.

"Cher frère, je me sens uni à vous par des liens indestructibles, parceque je les sens rattachés à Celui qui est la tête

toujours vivante de son Corps, à Celui qui était, qui est, et qui sera. Votre nom revient souvent sur mes lèvres devant Dieu et devant les hommes, et cette saison rappelle plus souvent mes pensées sur les souvenirs de l'automne 1832. J'aime à penser avec reconnaissance à votre accueil, non pas même tant à cause de ce qu'il eut d'affectueux, qu'en memoire de ce que j'y trouvai d'édifiant. Que le Seigneur vous multiplie ses consolations, et vous gouverne toujours plus par son Esprit! Adieu en Lui. Quand je prie pour vous, j'y joins votre mère. Vous apprendrez avec intérêt que la mienne est en bonne santé, et que son âme est bénie. Merle est malade de la poitrine; priez pour lui et pour nous. Je lui ai fait lire les deux lettres que j'ai reçues de vous et ou vous parlez des doctrines: j'aurais voulu qu'il vous écrivît. Marc Vernet part demain pour l'Italie avec son père et Anna. Madame de Staël et sa belle sœur sont à Coppet. Nous avons plus d'une fois élevé notre voix en prière dans cette famille pour Madame Erskine et pour vous dans le tems de la maladie de —— Elisabeth. Recommandez-moi au souvenir chrétien de Scott, de Madame Rich, de Capitaine Stirling, et de vos parents à Glentyan. Adieu encore. Demandez pour moi la sanctification.—V. affectionné, L. GAUSSEN."

"AUX GROTTES, 1*er Octobre* 1834.

"BIEN CHER FRÈRE,—Il m'est doux de me joindre à un frère aussi aimé que Gaussen pour écrire à un frère aussi aimé que vous. C'est par vous et par lui, plus que par aucun autre homme, je crois, que sous la bénédiction d'en haut j'ai été amené des ténèbres à la lumière, et de l'angoisse à la paix. Que le Seigneur vous rende au double le bien que vous m'avez fait de sa part! J'ai reçu dans ce temps la lettre que vous avez eu la bonté de m'écrire en réponse à la mienne. Je recommande encore à vous, et

par vous à vos amis, l'œuvre que le Seigneur a commencée à Lyon, et qui s'y continue avec un succès, non éclatant, mais solide et croissant, autant que j'en puis juger—plus spécialement en ce qui concerne les Catholiques; et s'ils ne peuvent l'aider par leurs dons, qu'ils l'aident par leurs prières, et combattent le bon combat avec les pauvres de Lyon. Que le Seigneur vous bénisse dans vos voies, bien aimé frère, qu'il se glorifie en vous! qu'il vous garde de toute erreur, qu'il vous en retire pour sa gloire en vous et par vous. Je fais pour vous du fond du cœur, et vous prie de faire pour moi, la prière de Paul, 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. Saluez pour moi, dans le Seigneur, toute votre maison. Ma famille, ma femme, mes trois enfans, dont le dernier, né le 29 Août dernier, est un fils, sont bien. Gaussen vous aura peutêtre entretenu de l'objet de mon voyage à Genève. Priez le Seigneur de me conduire, en sa lumière et en sa paix. Que la paix soit avec vous!—Votre tendrement affectionné et reconnaissant frère, ADOLPHE MONOD.

"*P.S.*—Je ne puis trouver, en particulier, votre doctrine du pardon universel dans l'Écriture *lue avec l'esprit du petit enfant*, Jean iii. 36. Mais que le Seigneur nous éclaire les uns et les autres Lui seul; et nous donne de ne pas juger mais de nous aimer!"

At the opening of the year 1835, the family at Linlathen consisted of Mr. Erskine, his mother, Captain and Mrs. Paterson, and their four children. Within the next two years four of these eight were removed by death: Ann Graham Paterson, the eldest of the children, died on the 3d of May 1835, in her thirteenth year; Mr. Erskine's mother on the 10th of March 1836; George Anna Paterson, the second child of the family, on the 3d of June 1836, in her thirteenth year; and David Charles Paterson, the youngest child, on the 26th of October 1836.

62. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

LINLATHEN, *30th April* 1835.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—About the time that I wrote you Ann's symptoms became worse, and have continued very bad, leading us to apprehend that it may be the will of our Father to take her hence. . . . The dear child seems aware of her situation, and further, she seems to hear her Father's voice, and to have some feeling of His nearness. Her affection for her earthly father, and her remarkable confidence in him and delight in his presence, seem given to teach her what is due to the Father of her spirit. She said to her mother the other day, speaking of her father, "It is just life to me to see his face." . . . Ever yours, T. E.

63. TO THE REV. ALEX. J. SCOTT.

LINLATHEN, *5th May* 1835.

MY DEAR SCOTT,—Our dear child is taken away. Her brief history, as far as this step goes, is concluded. I feel that Jesus has been doing that to us through her which He so often did to His disciples. He took a little child, and set him in the midst of them. The continual giving up of a naturally very strong will was the lesson which he had been continually giving her to learn, and which she did learn, and she found it to be the entering in by the door into the sheepfold. Her heart was made glad with that joy which no one taketh from her, and she departed in the sense of that joy. All the other children continue very ill of the same malady, hooping-cough. You will let Mrs. Rich know, and Miss Farrer. At the last it seemed as if a ray of the eternal light filled her. She died on Sunday morning the 3d May.

I wish to know particularly about Mrs. Rich's health.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

64. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

LINLATHEN, *May* 1835.

DEAR COUSIN RACHEL,—I know how much you are all with us at this time. . . . When I look at Ann's countenance, still radiant with that light which filled her spirit before she departed, I feel that I can desire nothing higher for the other children than that they should be partakers of the same blessedness. This is the sixth day since her death, and yet the face is most pleasing, as if to remind us where the spirit is. The parents are much supported, but it is a great breaking up. Ann was no common child. Her activity and friendship, and kindliness and zeal, brought her continually into the eye and thought of all the house, and how much more of her parents, who moreover had a constant anxiety about her in consequence of the fervour of her nature, as well as of the delicacy of her frame. Yes, Henrietta was right: happy child—happy, happy, happy. Blessed be the God of all grace for His wonderful works to the children of men. But we can only receive the true comfort from the belief of her happiness, whilst we ourselves are living in the spirit of that blessedness. A mere name won't comfort under a real heart-break. Davie and the father must be touching that happiness in their own hearts if they would escape desolateness. My mother is pretty well, and Jane Stirling's presence has been a great blessing. She was a special favourite of Ann's, and Ann's loving heart rejoiced in the sight of her. Farewell.—Ever yours, T. ERSKINE.

65. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, 11*th March* 1836.

DEAREST COUSIN RACHEL,—My beloved mother is dead. What a solemn event—to her, to us, to me? What a

history it recalls, of kindness how unrequited, of offences so freely and fully forgiven! There is nothing so like our relation to God as our relation to a mother. There is none who has borne so much from us; there is none whose forgiveness we have looked upon so much as our due. Sweet mother, she is now looking so sweet, so undisturbed, so pure, sleeping in Jesus! . . .—Yours affectionately, most affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

66. TO THE REV. JOHN M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LINLATHEN, *March* 14, 1836.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—When I parted from you the other day I little thought that the first letter I should write to you would be to tell you that my affectionate and revered parent was gone hence.

I think I had mentioned to you that she had had a slight inflammatory action on her windpipe, but I thought nothing of it, as the Patersons thought nothing of it, and yet it was the Lord's summons to her.

On Wednesday night for the first time they apprehended danger, and on Thursday morning at half-past seven she fell asleep.

My dear brother, I feel very thankful to be without fear concerning her soul. She was of a very nervous, agitated nature, and I had always the thought that the time of death might have been a very trying time to her, but the Lord gave her quietness of spirit, and delivered her from seeking refuge in those about her whom she loved, and taught her to lean upon Himself. My beloved mother has lived very much in the spirit of a little child, meek and lowly in heart, learning, I trust, from Jesus Himself, and most willing to learn from any one.

She has been to us, in her relation of mother, a most instructive type and witness of the love of God.

I feel in looking back that there is no one except God who has had to bear so much from me, or who has borne so much, and I feel that though I have often grieved her affection, I never could quench it. I can now think of her patience and long-suffering, and whilst I feel much self-reproach, I can bless God that He hath shown me so much of His own heart in her. . . . As I look on her countenance, so pale and still and sweet, the history of my past life is brought much before me—the vanity of all things, the vain show. My sister bears it better than I expected. There is not so much bitterness of heart connected with this bereavement to her as there was in Ann's. It makes an immense change on the world to me. She was the recaller of past histories to me, in which my sisters had no concern even. Mrs. Erskine is with us, and Miss Stirling went to Cadder.

There are many things which, if it be the Lord's will that we again meet, I shall be happy to tell you of her. Farewell. Remember us before God.—Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

It is a bitter part of this to me that I was still in Edinburgh.

67. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

CADDER, 13*th May* 1836.

DEAREST COUSIN RACHEL,—I don't think for many years I have had so little intercourse with you as for these few months past—these few months, crowded with so many things. We have had to-night a note from Davie, dated Monday last, containing rather better accounts of Georgie. We don't feel much encouraged by them, however. She is in her Father's tender hand, dear child, and nothing inconsistent with His fatherly love will ever befall her. That is our encouragement, but I don't expect her recovery, and

it will be a bitter cup to her poor mother, whose nature feels those things dreadfully.

I often feel that there is one heart that used to be anxiously and actively interested in all these concerns that has now entered into enduring peace. My dear mother is at rest. I was happy to see dear cousin Manie at Airth. I feel an increasing value for those loves and friendships, which I never earned myself, but which were given to me in my birth. I remember when the self-conceit of my heart used to make a different estimate, but I have fully come back to the unearned system.

68. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

[LINLATHEN], *Sunday, 5th June* 1836.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—On Friday morning little Georgie was removed from the valley of the shadow of death, knowing and trusting her Leader and Shepherd. Her voyage home was less painful than they had expected; but from the time of her return home the progress of her disease was much more rapid than it had been before. She suffered much, both from pain and breathlessness, but she was kept in perfect patience and quietness of spirit; and the Lord showed her much of His fatherly heart, as He had done before to her sister, so that she was very ready and willing to trust herself alone into His hands.

Davie is very delicate, and the uninterrupted watching which she has gone through on this occasion has, I have no doubt, made a breach in her constitution. James (Capt. P.) is better than I expected. He takes his full share in all these things, you know, not only being a very loving father, but also very anxious to save Davie. They were thankful that they were left to themselves to nurse and attend Georgie; for she was so timid, that their two faces were the only faces that gave her no constraint.

Dear Davie is most sweet. I had hoped to have been to see you all by about this time, and I hope yet to see you. I hope to spend an eternity with you in the kingdom of our Father. . . .

69. TO MRS. BURNETT.

LINLATHEN, *5th June* 1836.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—On Tuesday morning the little sufferer ceased to suffer for ever. I believe that the desire of the heart of God toward the child has been largely accomplished. She knew Him, young as she was, and His love, and that shod her feet with the preparedness to walk any way that He called her to walk, though it was unto death. The parents are very down-broken, though comforted with unspeakable comfort. Little Georgie's two passages were Isaiah xli. 10 and xliii. 2. I send them to you. What strengthened her in crossing that mysterious boundary may strengthen you in the way which leads to it. The Lord be very near to you.—Yours most affectionately.

After Georgie's death, the youngest child showing symptoms of delicacy, they took him to Clifton. In vain. He died there on the 26th October. Mr. Erskine was living at the time with his sister Mrs. Stirling.

On hearing of this death they hastened to join their sister at Clifton. Leaving Mrs. Stirling there, Mr. Erskine returned to Cadder, and shut himself up there in almost entire solitude, devoting himself to the preparation of his work on Election, which was published in London, and appeared before the end of the year 1837.[1]

70. TO MONSIEUR GAUSSEN.

CADDER, GLASGOW, 21*st Dec.* 1836.

DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—I received your very

[1] See Appendix, No. III.

affectionate letter, relating to my mother's death, and felt that it came from a brother's heart. I thank you for your love, and I thank Him who is the fountain of love that He hath taught you to love. O friend, let us seek to grow in love by entering deeper into our Father's love towards us. That is the source, and we cannot get it otherwise than by receiving it from that Fountain. I answered your letter immediately, that is to say, I wrote an answer to it, but I did not send it. I find it difficult sometimes to write to you and Merle and Adolphe Monod, because I wish to say things to you all which require more explanations than a letter will allow, and more mixing of love with them than ink will express. If I were conscious of being able to stand unwaveringly in the love of Jesus towards you in conversing with you, I think that I should not delay many weeks to be with you in Geneva. I should like once more also to see your mother and Merle's, whose embrace to me, when I came from Hamburg, from the presence of *Le brave Henri*, I shall never forget. And now since my own dear mother's departure, I feel my heart drawn to all mothers, and an obligation of reverence towards them all laid upon me for her sake, to whom I cannot any longer pay it, in the outward form. . . .

71. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

CADDER, 12*th January* 1837.

MY DEAREST CHRISTIAN,— . . . Will James ask Strong if he could get me a Chrysostom, the Benedictine edition? . . . You will find Smith[1] most interesting, but your ignorance of Greek and Latin and Hebrew must interfere very much with your enjoyment of him. I almost wonder that, considering what is under the lock and key of these languages, you do not make the attempt. I read the Hebrew Bible

[1] Smith's "Select Discourses."

with greater ease now; I am reading Genesis—what a wonderful history! What an impression it leaves of there being something under that simplicity of an immense magnitude and depth. This is your season of the year. Your remembrance of life and death and immortality are written on all the days of the month. . . . Most affectionately yours, T. E.

72. TO MRS. BURNETT.

CADDER, 15*th February* 1837.

DEAR FRIEND,— . . . We straiten our own spiritual education within limits which God never intended, when we confine our learning to His dealings with ourselves personally, instead of partaking in the schooling of others, which, if it did nothing else, would exercise and increase the spirit of love. I have often intended to write more to you about accepting our punishment. I shall try a little now. It seems to me clearly the meaning of the Bible that the great things which Jesus Christ has done for us, namely, His coming into our flesh, and suffering and dying for us, are only then properly and fully beneficial to us when they are in a measure wrought and reproduced in our hearts by His Spirit within us. Thus, though He has tasted death by the grace of God for every man, yet those only who are conformed to His death have the full blessing. And although it is the blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin, it is only when that blood is sprinkled on the conscience of an individual that that individual is purged by it, so that he is fit to serve the living God—Rom. vi. 5-8; Heb. ix. 14-22. There is one passage on the subject that I would particularly direct your attention to at present, Phil. iii. 9, 10, in which the true righteousness is described—the righteousness which is of God by faith. Now, the main point of this righteousness consists in being made conformable to

Christ's death. Now, what was Christ's death? It was a willing surrender of Himself into the hands of the Father, knowing at the same time that it was the Father's pleasure to bruise Him. It was a willing pouring out of all the hopes of the flesh founded on the idea of the continuance of present things; it was an acknowledgment of the righteousness of the judgment of sorrow and death, which, on account of transgression, God had laid on the flesh of which He had become a partaker. And at the same time, while it was a surrender of Himself in filial confidence into His Father's hands, it was also in full assurance that He was to be gloriously rewarded, by being raised triumphantly from the dead as the new Head and Fountain of life to the Race, by taking hold of whom every child of Adam might be saved. . . .

Dear friend, you little can understand how often I think of you. You represent to me your father's house and your grandfather's; and now whilst I am preparing for the press, I never sit down to write without thinking of the most affectionate heart that ever beat. After a small number sacredly related to me, I feel your father's friendship cleave closest to my heart.

I hope you will understand what I have written, but you will need to read it over twice to do so—not that it is difficult, but that it differs from common teaching.

73. TO THE REV. ALEX. J. SCOTT.

CADDER, 21*st April* 1837.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am much obliged to Mr. Maurice for sending me these letters,[1] which contain much precious matter. I do not think I ever saw an example of so high an appreciation of objective and formal Christianity joined with such a true sense of the value of what is subjective.

[1] Forming the volume on *The Kingdom of Christ.*

In fact, no one can value the objective correctly who does not know the value of the subjective; for it is the subjective only that is valuable, and the other is valuable as conducting to it. I ought to have written to you long ago. Your letter to me whilst I was yet at Clifton was very interesting to me, and I am happy to think that the same perception (and sensation too) of the power and life of the argument of the Epistle to the Romans is still continuing with you, as I judge from my sister's account of the Sunday that they passed at Woolwich.

I am getting on very slowly with my work, but I am getting on. I often feel fettered by not feeling myself permitted more plainly and fully to introduce the final purpose of God towards all men, as the explanation of His present dealings with them. For instance, I am at this moment at the expression, "Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it?" etc. Now I believe that this word is intended as a general reference to the 29th chapter of Isaiah (which speaks of the punishment of Israel, and the sin which was the cause of it), where something like it appears at verse 16, and that there is a twofold meaning intended. 1st, Wilt thou think of blinding God with thy vain reasonings, as thou wouldst do to one of thy fellow-creatures, forgetting that thy Maker sees in thee that which thou thyself art conscious of, namely, that thou hast been living in a resistance to His will? Shall the thing formed speak a lie to him who knows all about it? And secondly, And now that thou hast corrupted thyself, wilt thou dispute with thy Creator about the best way of dealing with thee for purging thee and bringing thee back? The end of chapter xxviii. belongs to the same subject, indeed the whole chapter. The Potter in Jeremiah xviii. is to the same purpose. With what perfect confidence can we look upon men lying in the hand of God, even whilst He is

acting towards them as an executioner, if we really recognise as true that "all the fruit is to take away sin," and that finally this fruit shall assuredly appear. The stoppage of the process for the individual, whilst it is going on only for the race, is a heart-breaking thought.

I have been living perfectly alone since ever I returned from Clifton. I took influenza almost immediately, and have been confined a tolerably close prisoner till the present time, in a house full of remembrances and shadows, but inhabited only by myself and two or three servants, with whom I have the fellowship of great kindness. I have been reading Plato with immense interest and astonishment. In Gorgias I find the doctrine of the atonement in its principle applied to the conscience, better than in any religious book I ever read: I mean the principle of "accepting punishment," which is the *fond* of the doctrine. I have also been reading Augustine with pleasure, and finding in him not only living water, but also many things in his forms of thought and interpretation, much more real and less conventional than the system of those who have built upon his foundation.—Yours affectionately, T. E.

74. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

CADDER, *Friday, 23d June* 1837.

. . . I propose, as soon as I have finished my book and received Davie home, to go south. I am writing my conclusion, and I find it very difficult to say what I wish to say, without giving more offence than is necessary. From the way in which the first half of the book was written—by fits and starts—I am afraid that it will have very great faults as a work. It is also deficient in arrangement and in proportion; which will make it drag in the reading, to all except those who are really interested in the subject. And then it is, throughout, in direct opposition to the

received views of Christianity. So that I cannot doubt but that the most truly religious people in the land will be startled, and even shocked, by many things in it. And then there is not a break or a chapter in the whole book; it goes on as if in one sentence, through 550 pages; which of itself would make even the most interesting book heavy and dull. . . .

75. TO THE SAME.

CADDER, 28*th July* 1837.

MY DEAREST CHRISTIAN,—. . . Yesterday I read an article in a late Number of the *Quarterly* on Cathedral Establishments. It is written by one who is both a sweet singer and a wise man of Babylon. There is much in it which Burke himself might have written; but it proves that, although the views and intentions of the Church party are most disinterested and patriotic—and religious, I may add,—yet these views are most markedly confined to the improvement of the flesh, and the building up of the national character, by the outward operation of institutions. The Church of England is a beautiful thing, but it is very unlike the carpenter's Son and the fishermen of Galilee. In these latter was exhibited the power of spiritual truth, and of faith, which, in the absence of all outward support, took hold of God. In the former there is a wise and well-proportioned combination of outward supports. And accordingly the advocates of the Church of England always go back to the Jewish theocracy as their model, forgetting that that was a type of the spirit rising out of the crucified flesh. And yet, as a political event, I should regard the overthrow of the Church of England as the opening of floodgates to let the universal confusion on the nation. The Lord is our shepherd, we shall not lack. . . .—Most affectionately yours, T. E.

CHAPTER IX.

Doctrinal Letters.

To an unknown correspondent who desired to know Mr. Erskine's views as to the Sacrifice of Christ, the following letter was addressed :—

76. EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

Jan. 15, 1830.

THE virtue of Christ's sacrifice is intimately connected with His being the root of the humanity. He did not take hold of a branch, He took the very root. He came into the place which Adam had occupied. He came into that place where the sap of the tree was as in its fountain.

He became the heart where all the blood was. And when He offered Himself as a sacrifice, and then entered the heavenly holy place, with His blood in His hands, He presented not the blood of an individual, but the blood of the race—the heart-blood. He said, The penalty pronounced upon the humanity was death ; and here the penalty has its execution, for this is the life-blood of the humanity—the life-blood of the heart drained out—the sap of the root drained out. Well, but what of this ? As far as Christ was merely the representative (although a full representative) of the whole humanity, His death as a sacrifice could not be a reason or ground for bestowing a blessing on the humanity. The old corrupted sap was

strained out under the penalty, and in fulfilment of the penalty; but this was no more than what was due, it was bare right. And the fulfilment of this penalty contained no reason in it why a new sap should be poured in, to carry life and health through those veins which had been so long the conveyers of poison through all the branches. The great secret is, He was in the world, but He was not of the world. He was in our fallen nature. He took part of the same flesh and blood of which the children partook, but He sinned not. He fulfilled all righteousness. He kept the Law. And as the curse came through the first Adam in token of God's abhorrence of sin, so it behoved that the blessing should come in token of God's love of righteousness.

Well, it was He who entered into the root of the fallen tree of human nature, poured out His life an offering for sin, even the life and heart-blood of the human nature. He Himself as an individual also had fulfilled all righteousness; not being subject to the penalty, but being the Head of the fallen family, He freely subjected Himself to the penalty, and thus acknowledged the justice of the sentence on the family. He put to His seal that God was righteous in his judgment, and that this universal view was no more than sin deserved.

And He did all this and suffered all this, that God's holiness might be fully manifested, and honoured, and vindicated in the exposure and condemnation of the sinfulness of sin in the flesh on the human nature, and that thus the barrier might be removed which dammed up the love of God, and prevented it from flowing freely forth on the sinful race.

In all this doing and suffering Jesus gave such glory to God, He so met and fulfilled the desires of God's heart, the longings of His love, and the purity of His holiness—

He so declared the righteousness of God in condemning sin and in forgiving the sinner,—that it became God, as the God of holy love, to bestow the blessing through Him, that is, to make Him the foundation of a new life to that nature which He had assumed, and for which He had made atonement.

And that life is nothing less than the very life which is in the Father, and was manifested in the Son. That life is the Holy Spirit.

In the summer of 1832 Monsieur Gaussen visited this country and spent most of his time in Scotland with Mr. Erskine at Linlathen and at Cadder. The one was in the full fervour of his zeal for those wider views of the love of God, the holding of which had so lately brought down deposition upon his friend Mr. Campbell. The other was firmly attached to the old Genevan faith. What to the one were confining, cramping fetters, to the other were the needful links by which a coherent, compact, consistent system of divine truth was bound together. What seemed to the one to be a mere fabric of human thought imposed upon the representations given in Holy Writ, obscuring the direct and full perception of God's love to all men in Christ, the other looked upon as the faithful setting forth of the divinely instituted mode by which the sinner was to be reconciled to God, and brought into His fellowship and likeness. Lively discussions between the two ensued. Soon after Monsieur Gaussen's departure the following letter was despatched to Geneva :—

77. TO MONSIEUR GAUSSEN.

(*Postmark, 7th Dec.* 1832.)

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Although I have had much enjoyment in meeting you once more in this world, yet I have

also suffered much, chiefly because I am sensible that in witnessing for God's truth to you, I often sinned against the law of love and meekness and patience. May the Lord forgive the sin, and mercifully overrule, so that it may not act in your mind as a reason against any truth which you heard from me. May the good Lord give you the spirit of a little child in waiting upon Him for light on those things which were the subjects of our conversation. My dear brother, it appears to me clear from Scripture that the blessing which God holds out to man through the work of redemption is *a real and substantial restoration* to the image of God, which is to be effected by man becoming the habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. iv. 24, ii. 22, and 2 Cor. vi. 16). This is not a fictitious righteousness, for then it would be also a fictitious blessedness, but it is a real conformity to the will of God. *This* is the mercy which God promised from the beginning, "that He would grant unto us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, *might serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him* all the days of our life" (Luke i. 72-75). See to the same purpose, Acts iii. 26; and amongst innumerable passages in the Old Testament let me specially direct your attention to Jeremiah xxxi. 33, and to Ezekiel xxxvi. 25, 26, which most strikingly declare this truth. And there is but one kind of true righteousness, namely, the character of God, for "none is good save one, that is, God" (Luke xviii. 19), and therefore, in order that a man should be righteous or good, he must have God dwelling in him; and thus Paul writes, "that the *righteousness of the law* is fulfilled only in those who walk not after the flesh but after the *Spirit*," which is God dwelling in man (Rom. viii. 4). That the righteousness which God desires to see in us is a real substantial thing is manifest also from those passages

which speak of the judgment to come; thus Rom. ii. 6, 2 Cor. v. 10; read also to the same purpose 1 John ii. 29, iii. 7, 8, 9, 10. "Christ came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17). It is quite manifest that there can be no true blessedness without this true righteousness, and that the fulfilment of that word, "Enter into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. xxv. 21), requires the fulfilment of those other words, "partakers of His holiness," and "partakers of the divine nature" (Heb. xii. 10; 2 Peter i. 4). And thus we are brought to that mighty thing which is the great object through all the Bible, namely, the mystery of godliness, the wonder of ungodly creatures becoming godly, the manifestation of God in the flesh, which is the true restoration of the image of God to man.

When man hears of such a perfect righteousness, instead of rejoicing at the tidings of it, he is quite cast down, saying, How am I ever to arrive at it? Has not God said, "The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"? This fear and dejection arise from his ignorance of God's righteousness, for he thinks that he has to build up this perfect character for himself before he is entitled to have any confidence in God; and as he feels his inability to come up to this high standard, he either endeavours to lower the standard of duty down to what he believes himself capable of, which is the antinomianism of the Sadducee, or else he substitutes a doctrine in its place, or rather the perversion of the doctrine of justification by faith, because he thinks it easier to believe something than to have the perfect righteousness in reality, which is the antinomianism of the Pharisee. The Sadducee supposes that he is to open the door of his Father's house, which has been shut against him, by doing certain moral duties; the Pharisee thinks to open it by certain religious opinions; whereas the blessed

truth is, that God has Himself opened the door by rending the veil of the flesh of Jesus, and now calls every sinner, not to the task of opening the door, but to the privilege of entering by the opened and blood-sprinkled door, and of looking to God as a Father indeed, and of being a member of His family, partaking in all the interests and prospects of the family, namely, the advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth, and the expectation of the coming glory. This is the right place for a man to be in, *c'est à dire*, in his Father's family, and occupied with his Father's interests; this is his right place, the place for which he was created and redeemed; this is his righteousness, and in him is fulfilled the word spoken in Luke i. 74, 75, and in Acts iii. 26. But now, is this righteousness to be the foundation of his confidence? So far from it, that this righteousness can only be produced by a confidence already existing. Confidence is the root of everything good in man, and as it thus precedes everything good in man, it cannot be founded on anything in man, but must be founded on something out of man (*au dehors de l'homme*). And what is it then that man's confidence is to be founded on? God. God has revealed Himself as the foundation of the sinner's confidence, and now in Christ He invites and commands all the sinners of the earth to give Him their confidence, because He is worthy of their confidence, "having made Him who knew no sin to become sin for them, that they might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). God is the blessedness of the creature, and the punishment of sin in the creature is to be shut out or cut off from God; and as the punishment is pronounced in these words, "DEPART, *ye cursed*," so the forgiveness of sin is pronounced in the words, "RETURN *unto me*, for I have redeemed you." No creature which had sinned could have any right to come to God, or to enjoy God, or to trust in God, unless

God had put away that condemnation of "Depart, ye cursed," which is due to every sinner, and had said, "Come unto me all ye that labour," etc.; but God is saying during this day of grace to all sinners, "Come unto me," thus assuring them that they may well put their confidence in Him, because He loves them, and confirming this to them by revealing to them the blood and resurrection of Jesus as the ground on which this invitation is addressed to all men. God laid on Jesus the iniquities of us all, Jesus died under this weight, and God raised Him from the dead, thus declaring sin condemned and punished and the sinner freed. On this ground it is that God says to every sinner, "Trust in God." Trust in Him as your Father, your guide, your guard, your everlasting rest. Take no step without Him, take no joy without Him. Let Him be your hope, your only hope, not that by thus hoping in Him you are to make Him what He was not before, but that by knowing what He is to you, you may be blessed in Him. "God hath raised Jesus from the dead, and given Him glory, *afin que* our faith and hope may be in God." Those who know what God meant when He raised Jesus from the dead have faith and hope in God, and those who are without faith and hope in God are those who do not know the mind of God declared in the resurrection of Jesus (1 Peter i. 21). "It is life eternal to know God as revealed in Christ," because it is in knowing Him that we enjoy Him and become partakers of His nature (2 Peter i. 2, 3, 4). Every man who knows God truly has eternal life in that knowledge, and every man who has not eternal life is without it, in consequence of his ignorance of God (Eph. iv. 18). Now surely it would be great dishonour to God to suppose that we change Him by our knowledge or ignorance; we must therefore acknowledge that the heart of God towards every man is such that, if the man knew it, he could not but

rejoice in it; for how else could it be life to him to know God? What then is to make me rejoice in God? A sight of God's heart as loving me, a knowledge of God's good-will concerning me? And how am I to get this sight and this knowledge? Jesus Christ hath come forth from the bosom of the Father to show us the heart of God. "He by the grace of God tasted death for every man" (Heb. ii. 9); and then He said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." It was this that made Jesus "the light of the world." He declared the Father to the world, to the end that whosoever knoweth the Father through Him might live by that knowledge. He came to seek and to save the lost, by declaring to them the Father's heart, and as soon as they know that heart they are glad, they rejoice in salvation; but whilst they continue ignorant of God's heart they continue to be without eternal life in them. He came to seek and to save the lost. God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, that the lost might be saved by putting their faith and hope in God. These lost souls, that is, all men, are called to put their faith and hope in God; they are called to trust in God, not because they have faith, but because God has raised Christ from the dead. A poor sinner rising from the murder of his brother is desired and invited to trust in God, to see God's forgiveness in that word, "Come unto me," and to put his faith and hope in God, because He hath raised Jesus from the dead. "God is the Saviour of all men, specially of those who believe" (1 Tim. iv. 10). God's heart is a heart of forgiving love to us before we believe, but we cannot enjoy God, which is full salvation, without knowing or believing what His heart is to us.

You seem to me to rest not on what God is, but rather on what God has said, as distinct from God. Before the coming of Christ men might have made a distinction be-

tween God and His Word; but now such a distinction is Socinianism, for God has declared that the Word is God. When it is not God Himself that we meet and trust in His Word, we are breaking the second commandment. Faith has become to the intellectual Protestant churches what the idols of silver and gold were to the Jewish and Popish churches. Why is a poor sinner to trust in God? Is it because God is good, or because *he* has faith? Am I to trust in God because "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses," or because I am justified by faith? Read the 78th Psalm, marking specially verses 7, 22, 35. God was always "their Rock and their Redeemer," but whilst they believed it not, they put away His salvation—(as the sun is always our light, but when we shut our eyes we are in darkness). He was always their loving, forgiving Father, even in His punishments; they were like the famine in the far country, sent to bring back the prodigal to his father's house. Do you not believe that the heart of God does indeed grieve and yearn over every sinner that continues at a distance from Him? and is not that grief the grief of love, which desires the holy blessedness of the sinner? Yes, it is the grief of love. God created man to be the image of God, and holiness and blessedness. And God did this, because God is love. And this purpose of God towards man hath not changed, but has followed every individual man through every moment of his life, desiring that he should yet be the image of God. And God hath revealed this purpose fully in Jesus Christ, who by the grace of God tasted death for every man, and was raised from the dead into glory, that every man might have confidence in God's purpose, and might yield himself unto God to have that purpose accomplished in him. This restoration of the image is salvation. Salvation is not for-

giveness of sin; it is not the remission of a penalty; it is not a safety. No, it is the blessed and holy purpose of God's love accomplished in the poor fallen creature's restoration to the divine image. And as this could only be effected by God dwelling in man, so the work of Christ has been God's taking possession of a part of the fallen nature and uniting Himself to it, without separating it from the rest of the mass of the nature, and in that part working perfect righteousness, and so ordering it that this part of the nature so possessed by God should become the new root and head of man, from which the Holy Spirit, given to Him without measure, might flow forth, seeking entrance into every part of the nature wherever it can find an open heart. And to this end is the news of God's love in this great work declared to men, that they hearing it may have confidence in Him who hath thus loved them, and so open their hearts to let in His Spirit. So we have no need now to go out of our nature to meet God, and to get the eternal life (which is God's life), for God is in our own flesh, and the eternal life is in our own flesh, and we have but to know this loving God, and the longings of His heart over us, and to give Him our confidence, in order to receive His Spirit into us.

And Christ's work of atonement was perfected by His death, not only testifying the love of God to every man to be a love which would die for every man, but also testifying that when God would restore man He would not restore that natural life in which man had sinned, He would not remove his condemnation from that life on which He had pronounced sentence of death, and that He could not look on man well pleased until man had consented to the righteousness of this sentence and had willingly given up that natural life which had rebelled against God. The man Christ Jesus did this, and thus He manifested the

express image of the Father, and so He was raised to be the second Adam, the mediator between God and man, between the God-nature and the man-nature. It is upon this ground that every man is invited and demanded to delight in God, and to drink out of the fountain of life which is in His love. Now, can it be said with propriety that any creature is a condemned creature, whilst it is commanded as well as permitted to enjoy such a God as this, and to drink out of such a fountain as this? Can any creature be said to be unforgiven for whose blessedness God is at this very moment working with a love passing knowledge? *O fortunati nimium, sua si bona nôrint!* Read the 107th Psalm. The only true condemnation consists in being shut out from that fountain to which we are all urged and entreated to come that we may drink abundantly.

And surely when persons can acknowledge that God has given Christ for men and to men, and yet refuse to acknowledge that the Spirit has been also given as widely, they forget that Christ is God, and that in Him not one person only of the Trinity, but the whole Trinity, was manifested. I feel that to separate between the work of Christ and the character of God is Socinianism. So also I feel that to suppose Christ given and not the Spirit is not less Socinianism. It is denying that the Word is God. Do you not believe that every man is in a very different condition now from what he would have been had Christ not come into the world? The word to every man, if Christ had not come, would have been, "Depart, thou cursed," and now, in consequence of Christ's coming, the word to every man is, "Come to the waters," "Come unto me, thou weary one, and I will give thee rest." My brother, if the condemnation consist in the word "Depart," tell me what is contained in the word "Come." When Paul declared this change of address, was it too much to call it

the forgiveness of sins? Acts xiii. 38. Compare this verse and the following one with 1 Timothy iv. 10. These two verses are a commentary on the two words in Timothy, "The Saviour of all men, specially of those who believe." No man could approach God through Christ, unless Christ had eternal life or the Holy Spirit for him, for no man can come to God except in the Holy Spirit; thus every man has eternal life in Christ, and he has also the natural life; the first of these is holy and sinless and without condemnation, and the man who walks in it is righteous; the second is sinful and under a condemnation, and he who walks in it, whether he has been a believer or not, walks under a condemnation. God does not change his judgment, nor does He call evil good, nor does He call good evil. Abiding in the faith of Jesus is abiding in the eternal life —leaving Him is falling under condemnation. Beloved brother, this is the concluding sentence: May the God of peace fill you with peace in believing, and make you to abound in the knowledge of the love of Jesus.

Read 2 Peter, 1st chapter. Farewell.

T. ERSKINE.

CHAPTER X.

Letters of 1838 and 1839.

Mr. Erskine left Scotland at the close of the year 1837, with the intention of paying another lengthened visit to the Continent. He lingered for three months in London, passed over in April to Paris, where he remained during May, June, and July, having as his close companion for two of these months the Rev. J. M'Leod Campbell, and for a week the pleasure of acting as escort to Dr. Chalmers. In October he proceeded to Switzerland, making a tour of the Bernese Alps with his friend Mr. Scott, and taking up his abode at Geneva, which he did not leave till midsummer of the following year. The event of this period which overshadowed all others was the death of the Duchess de Broglie, to which several affecting allusions are made in the letters which follow.

78. TO HIS SISTER MRS. PATERSON.

Osborne's Caledonian Hotel, *Xmas Day* [1837].

My darling Davie,—I am so far on my way to see you, but I shall be here for a few days yet. . . . I arrived on Saturday night and thought of going to Woolwich on Sunday, but I was not quite up to it, so I went to the church in the Temple, and enjoyed the peaceful prayers exceedingly. I really prefer the Church of England service to any that I know, it brings us all so much into one, and

it makes the minister so much the mouth and the leader of the people, instead of lifting him out from the people, and making him the only doer of anything in the Church. . . .

79. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

SHANKLIN, 19*th Jan.* [1838].

MY DEAREST CHRISTIAN,—It is wonderful to myself that I have been able to refrain so long from writing to you; I have had so many reasons for writing to you, so many things to tell you, which I knew would interest you. Soon after I came to London I had a visit from a Mr. Dunn (perhaps I told you of him before), who was a friend of Knox and Jebb;[1] he had read, I believe, my book on Election, and had sympathised with it a good deal; he thought that it brought out something which was wanting in their system, namely, the necessity of the cross to be received and borne by every one. He told me that many read Knox's book who did not find it condemn the most worldly life. I think he said that Lord Melbourne had liked it. It seems to me to imply a great defect in any work on religion, that it should be able to be read by those who walk without God, and to be read with pleasure by them. Mr. Dunn agreed with me in what I have remarked to you of Knox's ignorance of the meaning of the Atonement.

At Mr. Dunn's house I met first (along with Scott) with two young men, sons of that Mr. Woodford, an Irish clergyman, who published a letter addressed to Lord Stanley, in which he separated himself from those who were complaining of the loss of their tithes, and declared that he felt it to be a great privilege to be put in circumstances by which he might prove to the people that it was not theirs but

[1] "Thirty Years' Correspondence between John Jebb, D.D., and Alexander Knox." 1834.

them that he sought. These young men gave a most candid and conscientious attention to many striking things which Scott said. Mr. Dunn, himself a clergyman, and in the presence of these two young men, both clergymen, asked Scott to read and expound the Scriptures. Another day I was at Dunn's, but without Scott, who was not quite well, and met the same young men, and Maurice, who is a very metaphysical man; I have not got into him yet; I hope, when I return to London, to know him better. . . .

80. TO HIS SISTER MRS. PATERSON.

CALEDONIAN HOTEL, ADELPHI, 6*th Feb.* 1838.

DEAREST DAVIE,—. . . I hope James will read the review of Sir Walter Scott's life: I think that the reading of it would urge him to the reading of the History of the French Revolution, which, I am afraid, he will not read without some new impulse. I wish very much that he would make conscience of reading them both; I think that it would be good for him—tell him so, with my love. It is good, in the first place, to be brought in contact with a mind like Carlyle's, so unconventional in all matters; and I also think that it would be good for him to come in contact with some of his deep elements of political science, which in his hands is one with religious obligation. . . . Farewell.—Yours most lovingly, T. ERSKINE.

81. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

CALEDONIAN HOTEL, ADELPHI, 8*th Feb.* 1838.

MY DEAREST CHRISTIAN,—I have been returned from Shanklin about a week, and I have again got implicated with engagements to meet or to dine or to see. I have just been at the British Museum with Scott, Mrs. Rich, and Lady Inglis. I was much struck with the Elgin Marbles; expression of countenance you have not—for you

have no face but one, Theseus's, and that a mutilated one,—but there is immense expression of form and attitude and movement; immense dignity and grace. The Egyptian remains are very curious—so ponderous and enduring, and generally so unbeautiful. Scott mentioned that the form of the old Egyptian head resembles the modern European more than the Greek or Roman, and, phrenologically, was superior to them, as ours is also. There is a lady's wig, with the hair plaited beautifully, in great preservation; and there is a lady herself in a remarkably entire state. It is wonderful to see these people raised from their graves after three thousand years. We also saw Mrs. Rich's reliques of Babylon and Nineveh there, which recalled to her bypast times, as you may suppose.[1] I like Lady Inglis very much; she is a most true and tender-hearted friend to Mrs. Rich, and she seems to have a tender conscience towards God. I have received much kindness from Sir Robert and her.

Good old Mr. Dunn, whom I have mentioned to you before, continues his kindness. I was there dining yesterday. He was offered a bishopric once and declined it, on some conscientious ground. Wedgwood was there, and Maurice, who went home with me at night. . . . Wedgwood is a delightful man, full of truth of heart to God and man, and well endowed intellectually also. However, although there were good materials for general conversation (for Scott was there too), yet there was none. We continued all in separate parties, which I always regret in such cases.

82. TO THE SAME.

CALEDONIAN HOTEL, 27*th Feb.* 1838.

MY DEAREST CHRISTIAN,—I shall begin with your question about Knox's view of the Atonement. The reason

[1] In the year following Mrs. Rich edited the "Narrative of a Journey to the Site of Babylon by Claudius James Rich, her late Husband."

why I think that he took a wrong view of it is, that frequently he repeats in the course of his book that our concern is not with what Christ did once for all of us, but that our concern is with what may promote our personal sanctification. It is evident from this often-repeated maxim of his, that he did not see that in the atonement—that work which Jesus accomplished once for all for men—there is a manifestation of the purpose of God towards us, fitted above all other things to promote our sanctification. In the atonement, we see a man suffering to the full what we are called to suffer, and acknowledging it all to be righteous, and giving his back to the smiter, without resisting, and submitting himself to the whole will of God in thwarting man's will, both in doing and in suffering, and then we see this man rising out from the death so endured, and ascending up into heaven, and saying, Be not afraid to follow me; for whoso follows my steps in patient obedience shall ascend up to where I now am. I don't think that Knox saw that the atonement of Christ, besides being a righteous reason with God for bestowing on man the participation in the divine nature, was also the pattern of all righteousness in man, and the encouragement to all righteousness in man. It seems strange that a thing should be so frequently introduced in the Bible if we have not much concern in it. I have not the book here, so that I cannot refer to it, as I should like to do; but you will find the maxim of which I speak at the beginning of some of his more important letters or essays. . . .—Yours ever,

T. ERSKINE.

83. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

HÔTEL WAGRAM, 28 RUE DE RIVOLI, 26*th April* [1838].

MY DEAREST CHRISTIAN,—Here I am in this great Vanity-fair; and my heart turns to you as to a reality of

sympathy and love, from the evident outsideness and show and meaningless noise which is going on in the Tuileries, outspread beneath my windows; for I am amongst the slates in the top-story of a Hôtel Wagram, 28 Rue de Rivoli, whence I see the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. And I am endeavouring to learn, from this vantage-ground, more fully the lesson, that he who offers us these things is not to be worshipped, and that He who offers us Himself, if we will part with all other things, is to be worshipped. My dear sister, there are few people whose company I could wish just now, or to whom I could very cordially offer a room in my house amongst my slates, but you are one, whom I could know sitting by me, without being fatigued by the knowledge, at least for a limited number of hours. I say that, in case you should accept—you understand.

It is long since I have written to you—too long, considering our near bond; and considering also that our mother is no more seen amongst us. Her image recurs often to me. I feel anew the blank; for always, when I was abroad, I felt that there was one who did not cease to think of me and to pray for me, as she was enabled. And at that time you had your honest-hearted, loving-hearted, cheerful-hearted husband to occupy you; and Davie had her sweet rising nursery of immortal flowers, attracting her by their mystery of love and hope and fear. But now it is all changed—a change has come o'er the spirit of our dream—that dream which will continue changeable and troubled, until we awake up in His likeness, and shall be satisfied with it. . . . T. ERSKINE.

84. TO HIS SISTER MRS. PATERSON.

[PARIS], 14*th May* [1838].

DEAREST DAVIE,—. . . So you arrived on the 3d of May,

the day that dear Ann arrived at her Father's house. How time goes on! How many millions since then have passed through that strange dark passage, which she found so full of light. It remains for us still to pass through it; and the True Light, who lighted her through it, is waiting to be gracious to us also. I thought you would like Sartor; the chapter on natural supernaturalism, Book iii. chap. viii., is a wonderful thing. . . .

The Broglies have left Paris, which makes Paris a very different place to me. I had the pleasure and the profit of three weeks of her [the Duchess's] society, however, and found her what I never see nor saw anywhere else. Mr. Campbell saw her twice, and was much delighted with her. *He* is certainly better. . . .

17*th May*.—. . . I had F. Monod dining with me yesterday; a very widowed man he is, and full of sad yet sweet recollections of his wife. He is to send me a memoir of her, containing her own journal, which he says is the most interesting thing, next to the Bible, that ever he read. I doubt not it is so to him. He had imbibed some doctrinal suspicions of me, which to a certain degree kept him in a defensive attitude against me, and made him afraid of agreeing with me, lest he should be caught in some trap. He is a good honest man, labouring faithfully in the Lord's vineyard. . . . His brother Adolphe has more of the Scott and Rutherfurd class of intellect than any person that I know in France. . . . T. ERSKINE.

85. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

71 RUE GRENELLE, ST. GERMAIN, 22*d May* 1838.

DEAREST CHRISTIAN,—Many thanks for your long-looked-for letter. You know how long the time seems, when one arrives at a new place, among new persons and circumstances. This made me feel apprehensive that your letter

had met some mischance. So you are at Cadder, and the Patersons at Linlathen, and I am here; but He with whom we have to do is not far from any one of us, and our nearness to Him is our true nearness to each other. The spiritual life knows neither time nor space; and it is by living in it that we escape in some measure from the bondage of time and space. It is not by the exercise of imagination or the intelligence that we can get this liberty, of which Carlyle speaks so interestingly in one of the concluding chapters of Sartor; but only by living in the spiritual life, the life of the conscience, the life of God. . . . Houstoun has had relief, but he also, within the last two or three days, has had dreadful returns, with more suffering than he ever remembers; poor man, he is an example of meekness and patience, most edifying to behold. He and Ann are very friendly; and in spite of the delight that I have in my new house, which is a perfect palace, I am sorry to be separated so far from them by my removal across the river. I used to go there in the evening and have a *causer* with them; and now that Charles is away, I was become of more value to them. *En revanche*, I am near the Elgins, and near Madame de B., who, alas! however, has left town for Normandy; and near one other of my ancient friends. I love Lord Elgin very much, and the two girls, who are as fine creatures as ever I saw in my life; I am not sure that ever I knew girls of their age that I could so readily make companions of. Dear Lady Augusta[1] is a perfect angel. Lady E. is full of knowledge and curiosity and discussion, and kindness to whomsoever it is needful; she is an upright woman, who speaks the truth. Lord Elgin is much better, and went to England on Sunday. I have this morning had a long conversation with the French Protestant pastor of Bordeaux. I spoke to him about conscience; he was

[1] Afterwards Lady Augusta Stanley.

much struck by different correspondences which I mentioned to him between the outward recorded history of Christ and the inward conscious history of conscience. . . . Yesterday I had a most affectionate note from Broglie, another from Madame Cramer, from Geneva, and another from Guizot, thanking me for a copy of Carlyle's History of the French Revolution which I had sent him. All these notes would interest you, both on account of the writers and for their substance. . . .—Yours ever, T. ERSKINE.

86. TO MONSIEUR GAUSSEN.

71 RUE GRENELLE, ST. GERMAIN, 28*th May* 1838.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Thanks for your welcome. They have been indeed eventful years, the five years that have passed since we last met; but what years are not eventful which any man lives in this wonderful life!—undergoing a training for eternity, invited to direct personal communion with God, and with the power given him of resisting God and grieving the Holy Spirit, or of causing joy in heaven on account of his repentance. I shall be most happy to see you, both here and at Geneva; of course that formed a part of my plan in coming to the Continent. I thank you for your hospitable invitations, which I am sure I should have much pleasure in accepting, but I have already received an invitation from my dear hostess, Madame Cramer, so that if my circumstances allow me to take up my abode in a private house, I am engaged to her.

Dear A. Monod is indeed a most interesting sufferer. God has revealed the emptiness of the creature to him—which is a great revelation—and the sufficiency of God, which is still a greater far. How many there are who stop short at that first revelation!

I beg my best regards to all your family circle.

Give my love to Merle; I was indeed happy to see his

honest face, though but for a few minutes.—Farewell, dear brother, yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

87. TO MADAME DE BROGLIE.

RUE DE GRENELLE, ST. GERMAIN, PARIS,
4th June 1838.

DEAR FRIEND,— . . . A lost sorrow is so sad a thing. A sorrow in which God has spoken to His creature, and called it to feel that there is no Helper but Himself, and that He is there present to comfort, and sustain, and bless,—such a sorrow to be neglected and thrown off by the creature, and forgotten as soon as possible, is it not wonderful, and as sad as wonderful? And it is even so with all sorrows, and all joys too, and all events, when we read them aright. My dear, dear friend, I feel that this is the element of religion, there being only one thing deeper, which one thing is truly implied in this, namely, our own conscious meeting with God in the secret of our own hearts, and knowing Him there, our own personal God, loving us, longing over us with fatherly longings, and speaking to us so that we may hear and know His voice, and distinguish it from all the other voices within and without us. "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting, but the substance of the diligent man is precious" (Prov. xii. 27). All the circumstances which God appoints for us contain in them the bread of life, which is the will of God; but we often receive the circumstances, and even acknowledge that this precious thing is in them, without converting it into nourishment for our souls: "we roast not that which we take in hunting." And our fault in this respect seems to me always to be the consequence of our not listening. Listening is connected with patience and waiting. We have two classes of counsellors within us, the one good, being the

voice of the Spirit of Jesus in the conscience, the other evil, being the calls to self-indulgence, self-acting, self-judging, etc. The first is a still small voice, which requires listening and attention if we would hear it at all or get acquainted with the speaker. The others require no attention, and are attended to in the absence of an opposite attention. These two are the spirit and the flesh. Christianity consists in living to the spirit, and subduing or crucifying the flesh, that is, it consists in listening to and following and cleaving to the spirit testifying in the conscience; and ungodliness consists in going forward without attending to this voice of God. Our Christianity is not out of us, but in us. It is not in a book or in a discourse, it is in us; and the book and the discourse are so far profitable to us, as they awaken up, and train, and nourish this precious seed which the Son of Man has sown in all hearts. In every action of my outward or inward man, God sets before me the choice of right and wrong, of His will and my own selfish will, and my action contains my answer to God's counsel. So it is said in Prov. xv. 28: "The heart of the righteous studieth to answer,"—that is, considereth the counsel of God before acting,—"but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things," that is, instead of listening to God, he acts from his own impulse or wisdom. Then again, Prov. xviii. 13, "He that answereth a matter before he heareth, it is a folly and shame unto him." Our wisdom is to listen to God at each step, so that we may have His wisdom to direct us. See Psalm xxxii. 8: "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go, and I will guide thee with mine eye. Be not like the horse or mule, which have no understanding." He that answereth before hearing is he who refuses to listen to this instructor, and is like the horse and mule, which have no such voice within them. It is an inward voice, and a per-

sonal voice, that is, it comes from God personally,—to me personally, as one person might guide another person by the eye,—which is personal in its fullest intensity. Prov. xx. 5 : "Counsel in the heart of a man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out." This counsel is evidently the Wisdom that speaks throughout the whole Book of Proverbs, and it is also the Word that was with God, and was God, in St. John i. 1-9, which is also "the true Light which lighteth every man." And who is the man of understanding that can draw out this deep water? "To depart from evil is understanding." The man who will cease from his own wisdom is he who draws up God's counsels from the great deep. We are placed above this great deep, with an apparatus, a mental apparatus, for drawing it up. And what is this apparatus? It is the same thing in the spiritual world as in the physical : we must create a vacuum in our pump, we must cease from our own wisdom, then the great deep rises up into us. The verse immediately following agrees with this solution (Prov. xx. 6) : "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness, but a faithful man who can find?" Most men are so possessed by themselves that they have no vacuum into which God's deep water may rise; the faithful man is he who, knowing that he is a dependent creature belonging to his Creator, refuses to be his own guide, or his own end, and thus he creates the necessary vacuum. These things are very interesting to me. I know not whether you will find them so, but I write them in the hope that you may.

I have seen little of any of your friends and mine, but I have seen them, and what I have seen I have been profited by and pleased with. I have called on Madame de St. Aulaire often, but have only seen her once; she lives near me, so that I can easily go. I have seen dear old Madame Guizot, whom I love exceedingly. I have

also met Madlle. Chabaud at Madame Pelet's, and liked her well, also M. Grandpierre.

The more I think of our conversations about the different places, which belong to the subjective and the objective in religion, the more I am persuaded that it is impossible that we can mean different things. I think only that you insist too much on conventional language, which I feel called on to avoid, because I find that it is so often used to stand in the place of the thing itself.

. . . I am reading your husband's book with great interest; I shall write you about it when I have finished it. It is always a great delight to me to hear from you even a few words, though the more the better. I am myself a bad letter-writer, and I have also a good many letters to write, besides having on my hands and my conscience the correcting of my book, in which any word of help from you would be most welcome.—Yours ever. With best regards to Madame de Staël. T. ERSKINE.

88. TO HIS SISTER MRS. PATERSON.

71 RUE GRENELLE, ST. GERMAIN, PARIS,
5th June [1838].

MY DEAREST DAVIE,—What means your silence? Are you too much absorbed by memory, aided by the return of the season, and the sight of places associated with those dear spirits? The acacia-trees here are in superb beauty, if such sweet simplicity can ever be rightly called superb; and they recall to me our acacia-tree, and Joseph the cat, and those who used to delight to carry Joseph about, and to watch his gambols about the tree. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness" all the day long. It is the only business that stands out the burden and heat of the day, and finds bread that endureth amongst all the husks of life. We are not our own, but God's;

and we are under His guidance. If I were alone just now I should leave Paris and go to Switzerland, or perhaps to Broglie rather, for a little while first. Paris evidently disagrees with me. . . . We live in a most beautiful lodging, as quiet as if this great Babylon were a hundred miles off —serenaded not with fiacre-wheels and drivers, but with sweetest blackbirds, which have an undisturbed possession of garden and grove ground to a considerable extent behind us. We have a balcony which hangs over and looks over this pleasure-ground, on which we can walk at our ease. The weather has been remarkably backward, cold and wet. Mr. Campbell sometimes suffers from the heat, I always from the cold, sometimes wearing my heavy great-coat in the house to keep me warm.

6th June.—The last letter which I received from you reached me on the 13th May, and Christian's last was on the 16th. I have written to you both since; and sometimes think that something has happened which prevents your writing; or perhaps that you have mistaken my address.

At Lady Olivia's, *Marbœuf*, Lord Mandeville, her son-in-law, has a meeting for conversing on the Scriptures every Friday. I was there last Friday alone; Mr. Campbell was at Hahnemann's. The chapter was the first of First Peter. Mr. L. presides. He began with election, and carried on some conversation on the subject with Lord M. and the others. At last I felt that I ought to speak on it; so I did. They received it very gently, but as a very strange doctrine. Mr. Campbell's heart longs to say something for God; I believe that he will speak at these meetings. I never heard anything more fearfully Calvinistic than Mr. L. He denied that man was here in a state of probation: this world is merely a school for the elect, and preaching is only intended to call them and train

them. How different from Wisdom in the Proverbs, whose voice is to the sons of man—the sons of Adam in the original. I should feel thankful to be used to deliver any soul from the yoke of such a system. There is a man here whom I like very much—the Lutheran minister. He is a great friend of Madame de B.; he is German, and is large and wide and full of heart.—Ever yours, my dear Davie, with love to James, T. E.

89. TO MADAME DE BROGLIE.

71 Rue de Grenelle, St. Germain,
Paris, 14*th June* 1838.

Dear Friend,—Dr. Chalmers is desirous to see you—and also to see a little more of the country. He is very much obliged to you for your invitation, and will probably be with you either the end of next week or the beginning of the week following. I shall accompany him.

I was at Taitbout on Sunday, and heard the regular minister preach on that word of God to Abraham: "Ne crains point, Je suis ton bouclier et ta grande récompense." I wish you had been there along with me, as it would have given us an opportunity of mutual explanation as to the distinction and connection between confidence in God and consciousness of what is in one's-self. The preacher said, "We ought to consider the character of the man to whom this address was made, for it does not belong to any but to those who possess this character. Abraham was the type and model of the faithful, a devoted servant and friend of God, etc. etc. Unless, then, we can recognise these qualities in ourselves, we cannot appropriate the address to ourselves." Now, this appears to me to be erroneously stated, for the character of man depends on that which is his confidence. The man of covetousness expects happiness from money: he is covetous, just because

money is his confidence; so of the man of pleasure and ambition, etc. Their confidence in pleasure and in power, as causes or sources of happiness, is the root of their faults. If you change their confidence you change their character. If you can persuade a covetous man that money is not *son bouclier ni sa grande récompense*, but that God is, you change him from a covetous man into a pious man. So it seems to me that the word spoken to Abraham may well be spoken to every man, in this sense, "Created things are not *ton bouclier* and *ton bonheur—mais moi Je les suis.*" The thing in which I put my confidence for happiness has necessarily a directing influence over my whole being; it communicates its own nature to me in some measure. Confidence in a guide insures my following that guide, it binds me to him. Confidence in God makes me one with God, in a measure, and in so far it is righteousness. Confidence in God does not give me confidence in Him. My confidence rests upon what I know of God's character, but my confidence, inasmuch as it binds me to a righteous God, is itself a righteous thing. The only righteousness of man is to receive a righteous Leader, a righteous confidence, a true Guide. Man is merely a receiver, it is the consciousness of this which prevents the consciousness of his having made a right choice from producing self-conceit.

When God says to man, "Well done, good and faithful servant," He does not mean to flatter him, nor to injure his spirit, by self-exaltation. If the consciousness of righteousness is inconsistent with humility, man must remain in a false position through eternity.—Yours ever,

T. ERSKINE.

90. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

71 RUE DE GRENELLE, 16*th June* 1838.

DEAREST COUSIN R.,— . . . Dr. Chalmers has come to

Paris, and is over head and ears with delight; he has an honest, natural, unsuppressed pleasure in seeing everything and every person. My entire want of curiosity makes me an unfit companion for him; but I see a good deal of him, and cannot but love his honest bigness (a cognate probably of highness). . . . I am sorry to see young women of our land brought up in this country. There is an externalness in all things here, beyond what there is with us, which is an unwholesome element, most difficult to be guarded against. . . . Mr. Campbell is not making much progress, but he is certainly better and stronger on the whole. When I was formerly on the Continent I was always alone. Solitude was my habitual condition, out of which I emerged into society; but Mr. C.'s company changes that state. I believe that it is not wholesome for the mind to be habitually alone; it produces selfishness, or at least nourishes it. Mr. Campbell is a profitable companion; he is occupied with the one thing needful, and his mind is a very thinking and original one. . . .

91. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

71 Rue de Grenelle, St. Germain,
10*th July* 1838.

Dear Cousin,— . . . Dr. Chalmers is to leave Paris this day, after having had a month of great enjoyment, seeing everything with a freshness of interest and curiosity that astonishes me; he leaves Paris quite delighted with it. I had a week of him, making a tour, going first to Broglie, and from that to Alençon, Tours, Orleans, Fontainebleau, and home, visiting beautiful cathedrals, and passing through rich and varied scenery. I was very happy to have an opportunity of recalling former relations, which had rather fallen into desuetude. I found him most amiable, most true and infantine, and quite disposed, I think, to give me

back the place which I used to hold with him. . . . The activity of his intelligence is very great, and gives him a continual interest; but it works, not about persons, but about things, which is to me a diminution of the interest. There was a considerable party at Broglie, of very pleasant intelligent people. They all liked the Doctor very much, his naïveté and benevolence were so striking. Dear Madame was much pleased with him, and the Duke and he had many a long discussion on political economy, the law of primogeniture, the advantage of having large properties in a country, etc. . . . I went to Père la Chaise to see dear ——'s monument again. What a comfort it is to think that God is the finder of all lost things! . . . Beloved cousin, farewell. Love to all.—Yours most affectionately,

T. Erskine.

92. TO MADAME DE BROGLIE.

Hôtel Castellane, Rue Grenelle, St. Germain,
21*st July.*

Dear Friend,— . . . I have read the Duke's book through with much interest, and it has created a strong desire to see the remaining volume. Is it lithographed yet? The distinction which he draws between the religious man and the theologian is exceedingly good, and beautifully illustrated. I hope you will let me have the sequel as soon as you can; it relates to what has occupied my own mind for many years—the connection between man and Christianity, and the relation of that which is positive in religion to that which is principle. When I look at the four Evangelists I see a great difference between John and the others, and in like manner I see a great difference between the various Epistles. In some I see the positive almost passed over altogether, in some strongly pressed, and I sometimes feel disposed to think

that the one class is more intended for one age, and the other for another. In my own mind, I don't feel that I at all lose the positive by identifying it with principle, and that which is matter of general consciousness. I don't lose the personal character and relation of Christ to me by identifying Him with my conscience; on the contrary, I find my apprehension of that personal character and relation increased by it. If the Bible is given to us "for our instruction in righteousness," it is certainly intended to address our moral conscience, as otherwise it could not be for our instruction in righteousness. I cannot too strongly express to you the conviction which I have, that man can do no good thing of himself, and yet I cannot too strongly express my conviction that the Spirit of God is always present to him, and that he may take hold of that strength if he will. I believe that the first step is made by God towards all men, but that they may and do accept or refuse according to something in themselves,—a personal choice which belongs to the very essence of their natures. The frequent recurrence throughout the book to the inward test of truth, moral and intellectual, is most pleasing to me,—the intuitive perception of truth, the glance that one sometimes gets into the truth of a fact or a principle which is followed by sudden darkness, and yet remains as a counterpoise against all the darkness, although it is only a memory. I have perfect sympathy with all such things. I hope I may yet have some real conversation with him upon this subject, which is to me the most interesting of all subjects, except the actual thing itself, the life of God in man's soul.

We paid a very pleasant visit to Broglie; both the Doctor[1] and I enjoyed it very much. I saw Madame de Staël as she passed through. Mr. Duparquet has called for me, and

[1] Dr. Chalmers.

has asked me to see him at Etiolles, which I hope to do. Dear fellow-pilgrim, the Good Shepherd be with you, strengthening and comforting you. Mr. Campbell begs to be remembered to you.—Yours in much love,

T. ERSKINE.

93. TO MADAME DE BROGLIE.

HÔTEL CASTELLANE, RUE DE GRENELLE, ST. GERMAIN,
2d August 1838.

DEAR FRIEND,—I do not expect in this world to be delivered from a heavy weight of sorrow. We are called into a union and participation with Him who was a man of sorrows, and who, though a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Beloved friend, faint not, neither be weary; take up your cross and follow Him unto the same place whither He hath gone before. I believe that it was the experience of what you express in your letter,—I mean the experience of an insupportable burden of grief, which I could by no means cast off,—which first led me to take the view of the atonement which I now take, and to consider Jesus not as a substitute, but as the Head and Fountain of Salvation, supplying us with His own spirit, so that we may use the discipline of life, the sorrow, the agony of life, as He did, to learn obedience, to learn to find in the will of God, which appoints our path, a union with the mind of God. Jesus found that will to be meat indeed, as He walked His weary, sorrowing pilgrimage; He felt that it was all tender love, and He would have us feel it also, for we cannot otherwise be made meet for the rest and glory of God. And as He puts the cup of sorrow into our hand, He says, Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? And shall we refuse or hold back from this fellowship with Jesus, in the sorrow which kills sin when it is received in the spirit of Jesus, in the filial spirit? "These light afflic-

tions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory, whilst we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." The sorrow is not merely a difficulty which we are to endeavour to pass through as easily and as quickly as we can, it is the thing which works out the eternal weight of glory,—not at all in the way of a price paid for it, but as the wise education and medicine of God. We are like the Israelites travelling through that dreary desert, until our carcases, our fleshly thoughts and desires, fall in the wilderness; but in the meantime we have the manna to feed on, the will of God in all things, and we have the pillar of cloud and of fire, the presence of God in our consciences directing us in the way. And shall we say that we are without comfort? And have we not a hope full of immortality? Dear sister, you have often been a channel of comfort to me. I pray God for you, that you may meet a living will of God in every sorrow that bows down your heart, and that you may find your Father's love in your Father's will. Read the 3d chapter of the Lamentations of Jeremiah in the English Bible. I have often found it a precious word of comfort. Accept your punishment, not the punishment of a Judge, but the chastisement of a most tender Father, who afflicteth not willingly, but for our profit. Will you look at my book, pp. 103-105, if you are not afraid? I was out at Etiolles seeing Madame Duparquet. They had just heard of the death of Mr. Cuvier, which seemed a very sore affliction to Madame Duparquet, whose heart is very tender. The discipline is going on in every house, and in every heart. Let us take part in God's work with us. Let us enter into His plan. Dear friend, I do not say that the inward revelation in conscience makes us independent of the outward revelation, but I say that we never rightly receive or believe the outward revelation until we learn it

from the inward, and that the use of the outward is to foster and educate the inward. I believe that they are duplicates by the same hand, with this difference, that the inward, being a living thing, and being mixed and surrounded with things of a nature opposed to it, is liable to be mistaken, and even to remain altogether undeveloped, or choked in the heart, whereas the other remains always the same unmixed pure announcement of truth.

94. TO MADAME DE BROGLIE.

RUE GRENELLE, ST. GERMAIN, 13*th August.*

DEAR FRIEND,—I have heard from Dr. Chalmers. He tells me that he has sent a copy of his works, now reprinting, for you, and another for Mademoiselle Pomaret. He had not written to you, because he did not like to do it, until he had been invited to do so by yourself. If you have received his books, I doubt not that you have already written to him, and if you have not received them—that is, if they have not yet arrived,—you may perhaps write to tell him so. I should like to hear how Mademoiselle Pomaret is; I heard from M. Duparquet that she had been unwell.

When I received your last letter, I was so much occupied that I entirely overlooked the criticisms which you make in it on the views which you suppose my book contains. I often feel discouraged from expressing my thoughts, by finding that I do it in so imperfect a manner as to give an entirely false impression of them. I see that I have given you an impression perfectly foreign to my meaning. My object is not in the smallest degree to say what the conscience might do for man without the Bible, but to say that all that a man learns from the Bible, without its awakening within him a living consciousness of its truth, might as well not be learned,—that is, I believe that there is a real correspondence between the truths of the Bible

and the spiritual part of man's nature, in the same way as there is a correspondence between the outward relations of life (as parent and child, husband and wife, brothers, sisters, friends, neighbours, etc.) and the feelings of man's heart; and that as a man could not comprehend these relations of life if he had not a consciousness in his heart corresponding to them, so I believe that a man could not really believe the truths concerning his higher relations unless he had a consciousness in his heart corresponding to them, and that in fact he cannot truly be said to believe them unless that consciousness be awakened. I wish to guard people against supposing that they believe a doctrine of the Bible, or have faith, merely because they believe that the Bible is true. I believe also that there are different depths of meaning in the same truth, and that according to the degree of spiritual discernment of the deeper meaning so is the profit from the doctrine. . . .

I have never supposed the case of a man possessing a Bible and yet putting it from him, on the ground that conscience was sufficient. I think that a man who did so would be found to be sinning against his conscience. But I never suppose such a case; it does not form any part of my argument. I do not oppose the conscience to the Bible, but I say that the Bible is meant and fitted for the conscience, as a telescope is meant for the eye. The conscience is the eye, the Bible is the telescope; and as the telescope does not change the faculty of sight, but brings more objects within its range, so does the Bible to the conscience.

I believe that God has left no man without the means of salvation, and that a man without a Bible has still a God, and a God whom he can get acquainted with through his conscience, and I believe that salvation means a growing in acquaintanceship with God and in conformity to His will.

Remember me with much regard to Mademoiselle

Pomaret and your husband, and Monsieur Doudan, and to your daughter and her husband, if they are with you.—Yours ever, T. ERSKINE.

I intend to go to Geneva next week, early in the week —on Wednesday perhaps. Write a word.

95. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

PARIS, 15*th August* 1838.

MY DEAR COUSIN RACHEL,— . . . I had a letter from Dr. Chalmers the other day, proving to me that he had completely misunderstood my book. I need not think of writing another book to explain the book which I have already written. What are you doing? enjoying lovely Cardross, fair and noble Cardross, with its grave square tower, and its trees, under which our fathers' fathers have played, and its beautiful extent of grass, and its seclusion, and its simple peasantry—simple, that was, but that is no longer, for simplicity has left our land? It is possible that on the whole there may be a higher standard of moral feeling in Great Britain than in France at this present moment; but it seems to me that we are going down-hill and that France is rather ascending. The thought of my country is a very melancholy thought to me. The whole social system is sick; there is no brotherhood. I sometimes feel as if I could enter into the feelings of the French nation, when, conscious of the entire want of brotherhood amongst them, they raised their frantic cry of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death! They felt they needed these things, but they did not know how to set about getting them. They felt the want of brothers, and the only way that occurred to them of manufacturing brothers was to set the guillotine agoing, and cannons and muskets and bayonets agoing, and saying to all men, Be our brothers, or die! . . .

96. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

BERN, 14*th Sept.* 1838.

DEAREST CHRISTIAN,—I am often recalled to the remembrance of you and Charles at present, by the sight of places which we all looked at together; for I am now making with Mr. Scott the same tour that I made with you in the 24. These remembrances now must carry us out of the visible and the finite, if we would, even in imagination, follow our companions, as almost all our remembrances must do; for what can we remember that is not connected with some one who has ceased to be a part of our visible circumstances? And the chief character of interest which the lofty peaks (which I am now searching for amongst the clouds) possess, is just that same quality of carrying us up out of the visible and the finite. The meeting of heaven and earth, of the Creator and the creature, is the true thing symbolised by the scenes before me, and from which they derive their intense interest; as it is also the thing which is at the root of the interest which we feel in following a departed friend into his unseen habitation. . . . I met at Lausanne with an old friend of mine, who was pastor of the Reformed Church at Frankfort when I passed through that city with Begbie, before Archibald joined me at Hamburg; he is apparently dying now; he is a man of very remarkable talents and great amiableness. We had been great friends at Frankfort, and although we had had no correspondence of any kind since that time, he met me with much affection and much emotion; he told me that he would wish to live, if it were the will of God; he had been, he thought, a gainer by his illness, in respect of his qualification to teach others the way of salvation; he also said he had been so happy at Lausanne; he loved and admired his country exceedingly, and he felt that the loss

of life would be a great privation. Poor fellow, he does not look as if he could survive long; he remembered every word that had passed between us at Frankfort, and went over it all with an affecting interest.[1] I also made a new acquaintance at Lausanne—with M. Vinet, the most remarkable man in the French Protestant Church; he seemed to me large and free, and yet deeply serious. I was delighted with him; he has not the Calvinism of Gaussen or Merle—at least he has some other thing which balances it, which they want. I also saw Scholl, whom you, I think, saw—an amiable, excellent man. The sight of Vinet, and the reading of some of his books, gave me a hope for the Swiss and French Protestants which I scarcely had before. I am convinced that nothing but infidelity can be the consequence of holding that Calvinistic logic so prevalent through Scotland, and which is preached also, though in a more living way, through the French and Swiss Reformed Church. Men require something now which will commend itself to the conscience and the reason, and if that is not given them, they have only superstition and infidelity to choose between, and I think that they are showing that infidelity is their choice.

I wish you could get Vinet; he is more of Scott's calibre than any person that I know. I shall in a future letter tell you how you may get it. I met Tom Dundas and his wife at Geneva; I was happy to be met with so much of the feeling of relationship by him. . . . We intend to go to Interlachen to-morrow. T. E.

97. TO MISS JANE STIRLING.

7th Oct. 1838, GENEVA.

. . . You will by this time have received the news of the death of Madame de Broglie. To many it is a deso-

[1] Monsieur Manuel.

lating blow; to her poor husband and children, and to Madame de Staël, it is a desolation, a withering of life. You knew her, and you loved her, and she loved you; and you will feel that there is not another creature in creation that could fill her place to you. I feel that; but I know that she has entered into peace, and that this blow, so severe to others, so drying up of the life of many hearts, has for herself broken in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. She died by a brain fever, as her brother did, brought on, I doubt not, by the continued wearing down of the material by the immaterial. She took a slight cold, as she thought, about the 7th September; on the 11th it appeared serious; on the 22d, at five in the morning, her spirit flew away and was at rest. The fever affected her head very soon, but it had no power over her heart, over her free spirit; she prayed without ceasing, she loved without ceasing—beloved spirit. I saw her last on the 21st August. I left her that day with a solemn feeling, an indistinct feeling of the uncertainty of time-things; but little indeed did I realise that she was so near her deliverance. She urged me much to go back to Broglie when she did, which was two days afterwards; she said she wished much to commune on the things of eternity, and she said "Il faut du temps, vous savez, pour parler des choses de l'éternité." When I paid my visit at Broglie with Dr. Chalmers, he occupied her entirely, so she required a visit for myself; she pressed it so much that, if it had not been that I did not like to trespass on Mr. Scott's time, I should certainly have gone. As I was going out of the room, she said, "Am I ever to see you again in this world?" I hope to pass eternity with her. It is wonderful to me to think what a place she has occupied in my life, since I have become acquainted with her. Her husband has been supported in a wonderful manner. He and Madlle. Pomaret

never left her bedside after the fever decidedly took possession of her. Madame Vernet yesterday read me a letter of Madlle. Pomaret to Adèle,[1] in which she speaks of him as of one who has consecrated himself to God; she says, "Auprès de lui, je me trouve comme dans une église; il est saint." The impression that she herself made on all the servants and doctors that came was remarkable; they felt that she was holy. And now she is no more seen of men; her feet, which here were shod with the preparedness of the gospel of peace, now stand in the gates of the New Jerusalem. Her son was absent on a walking expedition, so that they did not know where he was, or how to reach him. Louise was at Milan; since she heard of it her grief has been violent. The God of blessing give them all a blessing in this bitter cup. I have seen old Madame Necker, to whom she was as a daughter, the most affectionate of daughters. . . .

98. TO HIS SISTER MRS STIRLING.

GENEVA, *Oct.* 10, 1838.

MY DEAR CHRISTIAN,—I have lost a great friend, a dear friend, since I last wrote to you. Madame de Broglie's death has changed the world for me a good deal. Her acquaintance has been a considerable feature in my life, more so, indeed, than that of any person whom I have not known from infancy. There was an activity in her friendship—an activity both of heart and of intelligence—that I never met with except in Dr. Stuart, and an activity which was continually directed upwards. Her character had undergone a great change since I last saw her; she was not more occupied about eternal things, but her occupation with them was much more healthy; she seemed to me to live much in the spirit of prayer, enjoying the love and peace of

[1] Madame de Staël, sister-in-law to Madame de Broglie.

God to a great degree, and making it her business to learn His righteousness. I wish you had seen her; although I believe you will soon see her, and see her in a form which will still more perfectly utter that spiritual beauty which her Creator intended her to utter than the form in which I have known her; but yet I wish you had seen her, that you might understand what I mean when I say that she and our brother James were the two most perfect symbols, in their persons, of a spiritual being, having a mission to fulfil in this world, and not belonging to it, that I have met with in my pilgrimage. I always thought James most beautiful, and I thought her most beautiful. They were both like what I can suppose glorified humanity will be. There was an unspeakable charm about her; such a truth of heart, which used a most remarkable intelligence only for the purposes of truth. I may have as much intercourse with her still, of the most profitable sort; but I cannot help feeling the earth much emptier for her removal.

Oct. 14.—I have been at church, where I met Madame Vernet, who told me that yesterday she had a letter from M. de Broglie himself, poor man. I intend to go out to Carra (her campagne) to-morrow, to see more of her, and to hear of these mourners. I am now living by myself, which I have not done since I left England, having first had Mr. Campbell and afterwards Mr. Scott for my companion. They are both remarkable men; but Scott is, in point of intellect, one of the first, if not the first, man that I have known. I had an interlude of Dr. Chalmers for some days as a variety. He went with me to Broglie, where he was delighted with her, and she with him; that is, with his honesty, and his naturalness, and his kindliness; dear woman, when we took our leave, she told me that she did not consider that as a visit from me, for that she had been so entirely occupied with Dr. Chalmers; she said, "I

know you will not be hurt by it." The last day that I saw her was the 21st of August; there was something in our meeting like a farewell, like a leave-taking; she spoke of the danger of being carried away by particular ideas; she expressed her fear for me in that respect, saying at the same time that, although younger than I was, she felt something like a maternal care for me, as well as a sisterly, and she gave me a lithograph etching of one of Overbeck's little pieces—Jesus standing at the door and knocking; she wrote the date under it, 21st August, and "Il n'y a point d'autre Sauveur que moi." He was indeed knocking at the door for her, in a sense which neither of us thought of at the time; though she told me that she often felt a most remarkable longing for death. All her outward relations were happy, and yet she had a deep melancholy that perpetually weighed upon her heart. I had a letter yesterday from cousin Rachel; I am glad to hear good accounts of her invalids. . . . Yours ever, T. E.

99. TO THE REV. JOHN M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

GENEVA, 17*th Oct.* 1838.

DEAR BROTHER,—I heard of your marriage from my sister, Mrs. Paterson. May the Lord abundantly bless you and her in your relation to each other, and make you instruments of righteousness in the church and in the world. I hope you may both prove in your own hearts that your union is of the Lord.

Your marriage took place just four days after the death of Madame de Broglie. I think I showed you that little engraving which she gave me that last day that I saw her in Paris, representing Jesus standing at the door and knocking. How little did I realise at the time that Jesus was so soon to open the door of her clay prison, and give a full release to her blessed yet wearied spirit from the conflict

of this world! I cannot express to you what a gap her removal makes to me in this visible order of things. She was connected in my mind with every subject of thought, and she possessed that idiosyncrasy, that individuality that prevents the possibility of her idea ever being confounded or mixed up with the idea of any other being. No other creature could fill the place which she filled in the minds and lives of those who knew her.

Her husband has received the stroke as from God, and though desolate is supported. I can conceive no resource for a human heart that has lost what he has lost but in an entire surrender of itself to God. In the meantime this seems to be his own feeling; he seems to desire simply to do and to receive the will of God. Her friendship has been to me a great gift. She has been a witness to me for God, a voice crying in the wilderness. She has been a warner and a comforter. I have seen her continually thirsting after a spiritual union with God. I have heard the voice of her heart crying after God out from the midst of all things which make this life pleasant and satisfying. She had a husband whose thoughts were large and high, and whose character was noble, affectionately attached to her. She had amiable, promising children. She had herself all the gifts of mind and character—intelligence, imagination, nobleness, and thoughts that wandered through eternity. She had a heart fitted for friendship, and she had friends who could appreciate her; but her God suffered her not to find rest in these things, her ear was opened to His own paternal voice, and she became His child, in the way that the world is not and knoweth not. I see her before me, her loving spirit uttering itself through every feature of her beautiful and animated countenance.

Remember me most kindly to your brother and his wife, and to the Macnabbs. Farewell. T. ERSKINE.

100. TO HIS SISTER MRS. PATERSON.

GENEVA, 15*th Nov.* [1838].

DEAREST DAVIE,—I have just returned from a visit to Lausanne, where I had much enjoyment. Vinet is a delightful man, simple and natural, with a kindly sense of the ludicrous in him, and most candid. Manuel, the other eye of Lausanne, is dead. He was my first continental friend—in 1822.[1] I made his acquaintance when your dear Ann was four months old. Vinet was very willing to confer with me, but he is so continually besieged with visitors that it is not easy to get him for any length of time alone. I saw others of the Lausanne pastors and professors and young ministers, and I observed Vinet's mark upon them all. There is no narrowness about them, and they are more natural, apparently living less by rule than by a living instinct. The successful candidate for one of their theological chairs within the last two months, acknowledged his belief of a universal final restoration, and this to the judges on whom his election depended. Vinet drove me out (in a *char*) to a family in the country, the lady of which had translated one of my books, but had been prevented from publishing it by hearing that Madame de Broglie was engaged in the same thing. I found her a very interesting person, full of heart and simplicity. I promised to send

[1] "Le pasteur Manuel était un de ces hommes dont ne cessent de parler tous ceux qui les ont connus, mais dont les générations suivantes savent à peine le nom. . . . La sagesse et la poésie découlaient de son âme, 'comme le miel d'un rayon trop pleine.' Le mot est de Vinet, qui ne peut assez dire le bien que cet homme a fait en causant. 'Le charme de sa conversation était si grand, dit-il, qu'on ne croyait d'abord avoir que du plaisir; mais en revenant par le souvenir sur une heure délicieuse passée auprès de cet incomparable causeur, on était surpris de se trouver riche d'une vertu de plus, s'il est permis d'appeler ainsi toute puissance qui porte vers le bien et vers la vérité.'"—*Alexandre Vinet, Histoire de sa Vie et de ses Ouvrages,* par E. Rambert. Troisième Edition. Lausanne, 1876.

her the book on Election. I wish to re-write that book, to make it more compact and more orderly, and I think that I could probably do it better in Switzerland than in Italy. Madame Cramer, dear, kind woman, is urging me very much to come to her house. . . . T. ERSKINE.

101. TO MADAME FOREL.

GENÈVE, 19*th Nov.* 1838.

DEAR MADAME,—I send you my book on the doctrine of Election, or rather on the doctrine of Conscience, for that would be the truest description of its contents, and at the same time I would commend it to your patience, and indulgence, and candour. You will often feel surprised and even shocked in reading it,—you will be sometimes tempted to think me a mere rationalist, but I know that I am not so.

The leading idea of the book is that each individual man is a little world in which that whole history which took place in Judea 1800 years ago is continually reproduced. Each of us is, or has been, that world spoken of in St. John i. 10, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." I believe that the light which shines in each man's conscience is the real presence of Jesus, "the Word which was with God, and was God," and that the egoism and vanity and hypocrisy, and worldly and fleshly desires within us, are represented by the Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees, Herod and Pilate, etc. I believe that the presence of Jesus in us, with His quickening (vivifiant) spirit, gives to each of us the power, whether we use it or not, of joining and taking part with Him against the evils of our own hearts, and I believe that in as far as we do so we become partakers of His nature and members of His body. I believe that Jesus is the one Elect, and that those who by thus taking part with Jesus

become members of His body, become also members of the election, and that those who continue to resist Him shut themselves out from the election. In this way also I believe that, as Christ was really given to men immediately after the Fall, all are elect in Him, He being in them all, and all are reprobate or rejected in the first Adam ; but that we can make either our election or our reprobation sure by joining ourselves either to the one party or the other. I believe that God takes the first step to every man, and draws every man by His Spirit, and that man's part is acceptance and yielding.

I am sensible that many readers may be tempted to think, from my dwelling so much on the internal history of Christianity in the individual, that I overlook or undervalue the external facts ; but my desire was to restore what I conceived the lost equilibrium by drawing the attention to that part which had been generally neglected. I also wished to show that we really do not and cannot understand the outward history of Christ until we recognise its correspondence with this inward history. The very same mysteries which appear in the outward history of Christ are to be found in our own hearts ; and when we find them there, although we do not comprehend them the more on that account by our understanding, yet we feel that we get the explanation of them. I believe also that as each man is a world, and a resemblance of the large world, so the whole mass of individuals constitute another unity, another world, and that as Jesus is in each man, so He is the new and heavenly root of spiritual life to this larger world, and that what He did outwardly for the larger was for the purpose of bringing this life and light inwardly to all the individuals. But I need not go over these things. After you have read it, if your patience holds out so long, I shall be most happy to converse with you about it. I

feel very much obliged to M. Vinet for having introduced me to the acquaintance of yourself and Mr. F. Indeed, my visit to Lausanne was altogether most gratifying to me, I met with so much fraternity and so much candour. Farewell for the present, and I remain, with much respect and regard, your obedient servant, T. ERSKINE.

102. TO THE REV. ALEX. J. SCOTT.

GENEVA, 2*d December* 1838.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I ought before now to have acknowledged your letter. You see that I am still here. I am still, however, in the expectation of spending at least a part of the winter at Rome. I have a wish to see that world's grave again, and to listen to the voice which comes out of it. You will have heard that Sir John Hay died there a month ago; poor Lady Hay will be a very desolate widow. Manuel also is dead. Both of these men had a great enjoyment of life, though in very different ways.

I passed a week lately at Lausanne, and saw a good deal of Vinet and of some of the others, pastors and professors. Vinet is very amiable, very natural, and has that basis of thought in him on which thoughts from all quarters can find a footing or a rooting. I like him so much that I could be tempted to spend the winter at Lausanne, if I did not see that he is in such continual request as would prevent much quiet personal intercourse. His sermons, *Discours sur quelques sujets religieux*, are very interesting. He is always aiming at the *terrain commun*, though I do not find that he hits it. It is obvious that the pastoral and professorial society there is much influenced by him. Some of the young clergy I liked very much; they are simple-hearted and free, and undogmatical. There has never been any distinctly avowed heterodoxy at Lausanne, so that they have had no call to define their faith, like our Gene-

vese friends. I was present at a public disputation, at which a dissertation by a candidate for the philosophical chair in the Academy was attacked and defended. The title of the dissertation was *Science et Foi*, and its avowed object was to show that philosophy rightly pursued would reproduce the truths of Christianity, so that the objects of faith would be verified by the intelligence. The disputation was not interesting, but I have read the discourse with considerable interest; and if I return to Lausanne I think I shall try to see the writer. His discourse contains a history of philosophy, which he considers as the history of the development of the human mind. Schelling and Hegel are, according to him, the men who have put the top-stone on the building commenced by Descartes on the subjective side and by Bacon on the objective, for he commences his historical sketch with these moderns. I shall quote for your behoof one of his theses which he undertakes to defend: "La justice est composée de deux élémens, la justice qui punit et la justice qui pardonne. La miséricorde est un devoir de la justice, comme la sévérité et la peine; ou plutôt la peine n'a pour but que l'absolution."

Dear Mme. Cramer is full of kindness, and her whole family, so also is Mme. Vernet; but I have little intercourse with Gaussen and Merle, etc.; they are occupied with their Academy. I must copy another thesis of this philosophical candidate: "C'est aller contre l'esprit du protestantisme que d'envisager la Bible comme la base et le principe unique de notre foi."

I see something more of Diodati,[1] but he also is very busy, having engaged to give a course on the revival of philosophy. I heard his opening lecture, which was very good. Give my affectionate regards to your people, your own household, Wedgwood, etc. T. ERSKINE.

[1] Married to one of the Vernets.

103. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

GENÈVE, 3*d Jan.* 1839.

DEAREST CHRISTIAN,— . . . I have just returned from a visit to Lausanne, where I have spent a week very pleasantly in the society of some very estimable people, who have shown me much friendship. If Davie has sent you Vinet's book, you will be able in some degree to judge of his interesting mind; but his humble and gentle and sensitive character gives his personal intercourse a charm which cannot be communicated by any book containing merely expositions of trains of thought. When I was there, he and many more whom I saw were much occupied with the project of a law for new-modelling in some respects their ecclesiastical constitution; his reputation for wisdom and conscientiousness forces him into situations of trust and responsibility, which he would thankfully keep out of, and he is at present at the head of an ecclesiastical commission, which is charged with the appointment of ministers and assistants through the Canton, which makes great demands on his time and on his peace. His wife is a very pleasant, intelligent, unpretending person; they lost a daughter last year, grown up, and their only child now is a son of nineteen, who has been deaf since he was nine or ten, and whose development, in consequence, has been much stopped. I see this is a great trial to them; and she seems to desire to find the broken body of Jesus meat indeed, and His blood drink indeed. The question of the eternity of punishments has been stirred at Lausanne, by the circumstance that a candidate for one of the theological chairs refused to subscribe to the common doctrine; notwithstanding this refusal, he was elected. Vinet only says, "La lumière me manque."

There is a very singularly interesting young man whose acquaintance I also made, of a profoundly mystical charac-

ter, as well as understanding, a disciple of Jacob Boehme, who gave me a sketch of a work to which he has devoted his life ; he spoke to me for I daresay three hours without intermission, opening up to me a fine heart and a rich understanding. I found him agonised in his spirit about the destiny of the fallen angels ; there is something very interesting in this for the heart, and his love for these beings does not interfere with his love for his own kind. He considers this world and the constitution of TIME as a remedial dispensation, arising out of the fall of an angelic race—a parenthesis in the midst of eternity—and his work is to be a history of TIME. . . .

104. TO MADAME VINET.

GENÈVE, *6th Feb.* 1839.

M. BOST has brought me the little brochure, and the very welcome letter which accompanied it. I have been entering into the feelings which, I knew, the late proceedings in your Canton on the subject of religion would excite in you. It is a call to humiliation and prayer, not to discouragement ; for the results are in God's hands, and He maketh all things work together for good to those that love Him. The present condition of things at Zürich is a remarkable instance of good coming out of apparent evil. What I fear most, in Switzerland as well as elsewhere, is that the contest should become a contest of opinions, a contest between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, instead of a contest between the spirit and the flesh, between spiritual life and spiritual death. Our business is to give utterance to that voice which the Spirit of God speaks in our consciences, and this utterance is to come not out of our mouths only but out of our lives. Each man is called to be a member of the Incarnate Word ; that is, to have the will of God expressed in his flesh, and so written in his flesh as to be

seen and read of all men. What a fearful difference between what we ought to be and what we are! Our calling is to be like Christ; filled with the spirit of Christ; uttering in our words and actions the mind of God; and what are we? Alas! I know for myself how little of all that is accomplished in me; and how little the witness which my mouth gives for God's truth is supported by living holiness in my inward and outward history. We are then true witnesses for Christ, and then only, when we are ourselves experiencing and showing forth in our persons His death and resurrection; the dying unto man's will, the living unto God's will. The comfort is, that the cause of true religion in man's heart, and in the world, is the cause of God. God's heart yearns over it, and God's power sustains it. We forget where our great strength lies, when we look to any human strength for the support of the church. Our strength is in our Head, in Him who said, "I have overcome the world," and faith is really a confidence in the unseen strength of God, supporting us in opposition to all appearance of outward strength against us.

I like very well what you say on the subject of my book, although I don't agree with the application of it. The question is, What is the meaning of election in the Bible? You say, "We had better leave the matter as it is left in the Bible—the two extreme points stated—without attempting to reconcile them." My answer is, I think that I have followed the Bible; for it seems to me that the Bible is at special pains to deny the doctrine of personal election in its ordinary acceptation, and to make us understand that the true doctrine is, that those who live in the Spirit are the children of God, and that those who live in their own independent will cannot have fellowship with God, and that all have to choose between these two conditions. The difficulty in the intellect is nothing; but the

difficulty in the moral conscience is not nothing. I believe that all the fundamental spiritual truths are out of the sphere of the reasoning faculty, but that they are in the sphere of conscience, and that we do not apprehend them at all, unless we apprehend them in our consciences. When Jesus says to us, "Without me ye can do nothing," He means to persuade us to depend upon Him for our spiritual life; that is, He means to dissuade us from making the wrong choice of depending on ourselves, for surely He does not mean to say, You have no power to choose between dependence on me, and dependence on yourselves. My conviction of the importance of the subject is a very deep conviction.

I am very happy that you like the article on Sir Walter Scott. I agree with you in thinking that the views in it are admirable. You are the first foreigner (as we call all but ourselves) whom I have found capable of admiring it. The name of the author is Carlyle, a man of most original mind. I hope to profit by M. de Breule's obliging offer to be acquainted with me, when I return to Lausanne. Dear friend, I hope that this is not the last letter that I shall receive from you. I feel much obliged to you for your kindness. I feel the blessing of having Christian friends, friends who have communion with God, and who, when they think of me will pray for me. I beg my respectful and affectionate regards to your husband. Farewell.—Yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

105. TO MRS. SCOTT.

GENEVA, 20*th February* 1839.

DEAR MRS. SCOTT,—. . . We have all been much scandalised and shocked here by the election of Strauss (the author of that strange and much-talked-of book, "The Life of Jesus") to fill one of the chairs in the Theological School

of Zürich. This is the most bare-faced profession of infidelity that has yet been made in Switzerland. At Lausanne also some very unpleasant demonstrations against piety and religion in general have been made in the Council of State and amongst the people, on the occasion of proposing a change in the ecclesiastical law, of which the giving up of the old Helvetic Confession of Faith was to form a part. And here at Geneva, in an appointment to one of the Theological chairs, my friend Diodati, son-in-law of Madame Vernet, has been defeated by a man who is acknowledged to be in all respects his inferior, simply because he holds the Divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the atonement, which the other rejects. . . . I have made the acquaintance of Mr. Hare, the English clergyman, whom I like exceedingly. He is a simple-hearted man, very quiet and yet zealous. He has been brought up in the evangelical school, but he does not refuse to go into the meanings of the words. He is no connection of the Hares that we thought he belonged to. I was delighted to see Wedgwood appointed to the office which replaces my friend. I hope it is something comfortable in point of salary, and unperplexed, at least morally, in its administration. . . .—Yours, etc., T. ERSKINE.

106. TO CAPTAIN PATERSON.

GENEVA, 21*st March* 1839.

MY DEAR JAMES,—Davie's short letter is a large record of the goodness of God. I have the conviction, which I have just been expressing to Mr. Hare, the worthy English clergyman here, that there is no such thing as a sudden death, in the strict meaning of the word; I believe that God always, in some way or other, warns the spirit of death before He sends it. We know not what had passed in ——'s heart before he passed into eternity; but we see

that His Father's care was following him, and that the loving message which He sent him through his mother was accompanied with an inward voice, which had been received into his conscience. My belief in the continuation of the process of spiritual education beyond this life relieves me at all events from the agonising thought that twenty-six years of negligence are to fix the eternal condition of the soul for good or evil. I cannot read the passage contained in the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, verses 30-33, without wondering that any should think that the Bible decidedly teaches that doctrine. . . Farewell.—Your affectionate brother, T. ERSKINE.

107. TO HIS SISTER MRS. PATERSON.

GENEVA, 27*th March* 1839.

"Mais lors même qu'une pauvre mère croit, et ne murmure point, elle souffre ; les jours passent, les nuits reviennent, le soleil se lève tous les matins. Quelquefois, il semble qu'il vient nous dire, que ce n'est pas grande chose, que la souffrance d'un petit être d'un jour, tel que nous ; d'autre fois, il semble nous dire de la part du Très Haut, *Je suis toujours le même ;* rien ne pourra diminuer mon pouvoir, ma compassion, ma tendresse pour les enfans des hommes ; courage, ma fille, *ton fils n'est pas mort, mais il dort ;* et à ce langage, si réel quoique silencieux, notre âme se relève, elle est soutenue, elle se ranime : elle sent que le Seigneur est là."

DEAREST DAVIE,—The sentence which I put at the head of my letter is an extract from a letter which Madame Vernet has given me to send to Mrs. Patrick [Stirling].[1] You know that Madame Vernet lost a son fifteen years ago, in a most distressing way. There was a fire in the neighbourhood, and young Henri Vernet, about twenty years of age, along

[1] Whose son had been killed in an accident.

with several of his companions, went to give their assistance. Madame V. saw her son enter the burning house, but she never saw him come out; he and most of his companions were crushed by a falling beam. Mrs. Patrick's story awakened all her sympathy, you may suppose, and she has written her a letter, from which I have transcribed this sentence, which appears to me to contain a very touching and beautiful thought. . . . There was something exceedingly tender in the appointment that Mrs. Patrick should have written to her son as she did, and that he should have answered her as he did. There is a continually watchful care over us, ordering all our lot, every step. O ye of little faith! How my conscience answers to that word! How reasonable it is to trust ourselves to the keeping of infinite love, and infinite wisdom, and infinite power! We feel that we cannot choose rightly for ourselves, and that He cannot choose wrongly; and do we not know that all the end is to take away sin? Blessed end! O for its accomplishment! Farewell.

108. TO MISS RACHEL ERSKINE.

GENEVA, 26*th April* 1839.

DEAREST COUSIN,— . . . I have much pleasant intercourse with Madame Vernet, who overflows with love to God and man. I like this country exceedingly; I like the simplicity of their way of life. Very few people here have a man-servant, except their gardener, who is also their *char*-driver. You see no fine furniture, no show in any department; and you often find great friendships between their highest people and their lowest. There is a much deeper civilisation here than with us, which makes the minds of all ranks more capable of comprehending each other. But it is a civilisation which carries simplicity along with it, because it is a more mental thing than it is with us.

T. E.

109. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

GENÈVE, 22*d May* 1839.

MY DEAR CHRISTIAN,— . . . I think that I shall go to the other end of the lake very soon, that I may see a little more of Vinet before I leave the country.[1] I have just read a most exquisite piece of criticism by him, on Lamartine's last published work, in the *Semeur*, a periodical which often receives contributions from him. There is to be published immediately an important work of his, on the connection between the Church and State; that is not the title, but it is the subject. Madame de Staël has come to Geneva since I last wrote you; she is to me a recaller of many things. She feels herself a remnant, for she had completely adopted her husband's family; and she feels herself alone, although her own most amiable family open their hearts to her. She has brought little Paul de Broglie with her, who has been committed to her by the Duke; he is a beautiful boy, liker his mother than any of the rest in the form of his face and in the colour of his eyes, but he is full of gaiety, which she never was, from the beginning. . . . Paul not only recalls his mother to Madame de Staël, but also her own Auguste,

[1] "Il n'était point rare que des étrangers de distinction, en séjour ou en passage à Lausanne, souvent attirées par la renommée de Vinet, vinssent ajouter à l'éclat modeste et au charme de ces réunions cordiales. Un de ceux qu'on y vit le plus souvent fut l'Ecossais Erskine, qui avait une manière si originale et en même temps si profonde de comprendre le christianisme. 'Il est grandement hérétique, dit-on, écrivait Vinet; mais c'est un bien bon chrétien.'[1] Il n'avait rien dans l'esprit d'agressif, rien qui appellât la discussion; sa conversation était sérieuse san raideur, nourrie de faits et d'aperçus, et il était rare qu'on le quittât sans être riche de quelque idée nouvelle. Quand il reprit le chemin de l'Ecosse, en 1839, après un séjour de plusieurs mois à Lausanne, Vinet et lui étaient amis pour la vie."—*Alexandre Vinet, Histoire de sa Vie et ses Ouvrages*, par E. Rambert (Troisième Edition; Lausanne, 1876), tome second, p. 45.

[1] Lettre à Mdlle. Elise Vinet, du 10 novembre 1839.

who was born after his father's death, and who lived till he was nearly two years old—a magnificent, matured child, she says. She has also brought with her a most striking portrait of Madame de B., taken from memory, with the assistance of a very poor portrait, by a lady who knew her, and who, I should judge from the expression, must have appreciated her. There is an expression of sadness in it, such as I scarcely ever saw in a picture, and at the same time she seems to have hold of a strength which sustains her under it, and seems to draw her up from it. It is a holy-looking thing, and yet there is a most agonising interest in it, which would seem incompatible with its holiness. It makes one understand the worship of saints and relics. I have written to M. de B. to ask him if he will allow me to get it copied here by a lady who does these things remarkably well, and he has answered me in the very kindest manner, giving me the permission. . . .—Yours ever,

T. E.

110. TO HIS SISTER MRS. STIRLING.

. . . My present wish and endeavour is to turn my whole mind and strength to do God's will—not to look forward or behind, but giving myself up, practically up, to Him whom my soul loveth.

There are many parts of the Bible from which I have too often revolted, when setting my heart on things below—those parts which tell that tribulation awaits us here, and bid us raise our souls to heaven. Now, they are my delight, and my comforters, and my prayers. I have not yet that spirit—the spirit of a pilgrim, yet a willing servant—but I aim at it, and I feel confident God will give it, for Jesus' sake. I wish to be very busy in the duties God has given me to do, I would make it my meat to do His will, and pray earnestly that I may so be brought to abide in

Christ that His character of holy separatedness, yet continued exertion, may be given to me. When I can fix my mind on this object of my existence, I feel it fills it; I feel happy and refreshed.

There is a young man dying in L—— whom I go to see when I want peace. His is a singular instance, so all agree. Seldom does that peace which Jesus left us reign so purely in the spirit. His life has been short, but important. For some time the conviction of sin, and an unutterable sense of the holiness of his divine Judge, drove him to such despair as to unhinge his mind. But a sight of a crucified Saviour dispelled the gloom. One cannot look on him without recognising whose he is and whom he serves. The image of the Lamb of God is stamped on his spirit, and shines through the very expression of his countenance. To see him is to see verified the promise, "Peace I leave with you." He says little, but that little emanates from deep feeling, and is as opposed to a wordy profession as light to darkness. He assents to nothing that he has not felt and been influenced by. He is not well enough to read to himself, but his mind dwells on the promises which are hid in his heart. I bid him repeat to me what comforted him; he repeated the last verses of Ps. lxxiii., and then the two last of Rom. viii. He does not suffer; his peace never varies. Every thought, every hope, hinges on the Saviour. He abides in Him, and oh, how richly does Christ abide in this dying saint! I but once heard him sigh; it was when I asked him if he would be satisfied yet to live a long life here below. He sighed and paused, and hesitatingly said, "Christ would give me grace to be resigned to His will, but oh, to be with Him would be far better." . . . Yet blessed be God, I think that I feel more that my only hope and my satisfying portion is in heaven. I think I in some degree close with that covenant which says, "In the world

ye shall have tribulation;" because in Christ I find peace. Yet oh, how dependent at each moment am I; and I am willing to be so. I cast myself on Jesus; Lord save me. . . . . The very Rev. old Ebenezer Brown[1] I have twice heard preach, and a most interesting exhibition it is; he is a specimen of old Presbyterian eloquence and style. There is something very dignified in his energetic yet subdued manner; his old broad Scotch, his deep sonorous voice, rendered very inarticulate now from old age, but famed in his youth for reaching a mile at tent preachings; and oh how fain would he that it reached many and many a mile, if he could but bring poor sinners to his loved Saviour! Somehow, every word he utters melts me to tears; Christ crucified is all his theme, all his salvation, and all his desire. Humility, simplicity, serene peace, and that single repose in the Saviour which has brought the spirit of Jesus so eminently and so purely into his heart and life, are what characterise this aged saint. The pathos, the spirit, the unction of his preaching, surpasses all eloquence, and is overcoming to an unutterable degree; none could imitate it, none could ever equal it, unless imbued with the same spirit from on high. . . .

111. TO CRAMER MALLET.

VEYTAUX, 22*d June* 1839.

DEAR FRIEND,— . . . This place is surpassingly beautiful; it speaks of "Him who in His strength setteth fast the mountains, who is girded about with power." The lake, which is so sweet and gentle, and so full of light, adds its testimony that the Mighty One is also the Loving One. You know the villages that are scattered so beautifully along

[1] Of Inverkeithing. See the exquisite sketch of him by his grandnephew, Dr. John Brown, in a letter to John Cairns, D.D., in the *Horæ Subsecivæ*, Second Series, pp. 270-276.

the foot of the mountains, detached from each other, and surrounded each by its own forest, and yet united together by their simple footpaths and by their common connection with one church, which calls out their peaceful families by its well-known bell, and collects them for one common purpose.

I am at Veytaux in the parish of Montreux, in the Maison Masson. Excellent quiet people. Under me lives the suffragan of the minister of Montreux, of whom my landlord's son (who was my guide in a beautiful walk this morning) gave me a very pleasing account. Write me a note like a good man, and tell me about dear Merle and his wife. Give them my most affectionate regards and fullest sympathy. I like to think of them and to grieve with them, hoping that all their sorrows will one day be turned into joys. Farewell, dear friend, and with best regards to your own good family, mother, sister, daughter,—I remain, yours ever, T. ERSKINE.

CHAPTER XI.

Letters from 1840 till 1844.

THE twenty years of Mr. Erskine's life from 1840 to 1860 were in striking contrast with those immediately preceding. From 1828 till 1840 pamphlet after pamphlet, volume after volume, was published; meetings were held, addresses delivered, means of all kinds, public and private, employed for the dissemination of his favourite ideas. On his return from the Continent in 1840 all this was changed. The pulpit of Broughty-Ferry Chapel was never again entered; the servants' hall at Linlathen no longer used for other than strictly domestic purposes; not a single volume from his pen appeared. It was not that his thoughts were less intently occupied with the great truths of Christianity, or that his faith in them had failed; it was not that the ardent desire to have those forms and aspects of these truths in which they presented themselves to his own mind welcomed by others had in any way abated. But it does look as if his experience had satisfied him that it was not in the direction either of controversy or outward activities of any kind that his strength could be best employed—as if his hopes of influencing thereby the opinion or action of the Churches had collapsed—as if he had lost heart even for the quieter method of speaking through the press. The entire cessation from authorship seems the more remarkable

considering the exceptionally favourable circumstances in which he was placed,—in the full maturity of his powers, with no domestic or professional demands upon his time, no political or ecclesiastical entanglements to warp or bias his opinions. He had always indeed a very lowly estimate of his own writings, and of any power over others they might possibly exert, and this may in part have restrained him from publishing. If, however, in consequence of his retirement into private life and abstinence from authorship, the sphere of his influence in one way became narrower, in another it became at once wider and deeper. Putting aside his friends on the Continent, his letters up till 1840 were addressed to immediate relatives or personal friends. The circle, it is true, was not only a large but a somewhat remarkable one. It may be doubted whether, in the range of Scottish domestic life, there ever was, before or since, in the same class of society, so many fitted by culture to appreciate, and by deep religious faith to sympathise with him, as Mr. Erskine found within the circle of his own cousinhood. Nor did he ever afterwards form two stronger or more congenial friendships than those which bound him to Scott and Campbell. From the time, however, that he may be said to have relinquished public life, a far more varied sphere of intercourse and correspondence opened up to him, especially with some remarkable men of the highest literary ability, and with ideas and sentiments congenial with his own. This will growingly appear in the letters which follow.

112. TO JAMES MACKENZIE, ESQ.

CADDER, GLASGOW, *March* 7, 1840.

MY DEAR SIGNORE,— . . . I am glad that you like Vinet. You may keep him for six months if you like. He is a most

amiable, excellent, tolerant man, who understands the difference between the spirit and the letter. He has written several other things; an essay Sur la Liberté des Cultes; Essais de Philosophie Morale et de Morale Religieuse, which last I shall also lend you. It contains reviews by him of different works of modern French literature, very good and original. He is a thinker, and a Christian thinker. He is the Professor of Théologie Dogmatique at Lausanne, and his large unsectarian spirit is a great blessing to the place. He is acknowledged as a man of real piety by the highest Calvinists, and yet he is no Calvinist. . . .—Yours ever affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

113. TO MADAME FOREL.

LINLATHEN, *October* 14, 1840.

DEAR FRIEND,—It was a real enjoyment to me to receive a letter from you, and to be enabled by it to think and feel along with my much esteemed friends at Lausanne. I am very undeserving of the kind and flattering things which you say *à mon égard*, but I gave a grateful and cordial welcome to the love which dictates them. I am happy to think of your husband and yourself, and of any of your friends, as maintaining the conflict, to which we are called in this world—the conflict of the invisible against the visible, of the spirit against the flesh, of eternity against time. It is a sore conflict, and much we need all the warning and encouragement that the experience of others, our fellow-soldiers, can give us. You are in the midst of dissensions, and we are in the midst of dissensions, and there is amongst us such a difference of opinion as to the way of arriving at righteousness, that we almost forget that it is the same end which we are all aiming at; hence much uncharitableness. There is a party in the Church of England at present who are so impressed with the evil of

setting up the right of private judgment too much that they would forbid private judgment altogether, and place religion in submission and obedience merely. This is good, as it is necessary, for the infancy of the Christian life, as it is also for the infancy of human life, but surely there is something higher than this intended for us by Him who said, "I call you no more servants, but friends, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth, whereas all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." Yet these men are pious men, and some of them are highly gifted intellectually. If the *Quarterly Review* comes to Lausanne, you will find a curious and interesting article in the last number, written by one of that party, as a criticism on Carlyle's works. There are many true things in the article, but that exaggerated idea of blind submission, without discerning the rightness of the thing submitted to, is so much pressed that it injures the effect even of what is true.

I am entirely of your opinion as to Madame Guyon, and to that class of religious writers. I am formed to be a receiver and a continual receiver, but at the same time I must judge and choose what I ought to receive. A simple passivity must end in pantheism, as you rightly observe. The great lesson to be learned in life is to make the right choice—to refuse the evil and to choose the good, to distinguish between them and to prefer the one to the other. You are pleased when you see in your child just rising out of infancy a readiness to obey you in everything, but you would be sorry if you saw that as he grew older, he continued still entirely dependent on you for direction, and did not himself learn to know the right way through the wilderness of life. The child does not give to the parent the highest honour when he merely gives him submission, and does not perceive the rightness and wisdom and love of the precept to which he submits.

Dear friend, I wish I were sitting beside you, that I might make sure of your not misunderstanding me, for I feel that on this subject there is great risk of misunderstanding one another; it is so difficult in words, and even in thought and feeling, to preserve the true equilibrium. When we see one part of a truth generally overlooked, we are disposed to become its champions, and like the old knights, to claim from all the world the acknowledgment that it is best and fairest. The Wesleyans have been generated by Calvinism, of which they are the supplement. Calvinism, by what I cannot but think a very absurd misconception of the meaning of the 7th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, teaches that a man may be in a safe state, and may be a true believer, whilst he continues carnal, and sold under sin, according to the 14th verse. The Wesleyans, seeing the evil of this, have set up their doctrine of perfection, which is certainly true in the main, for a man may hold fast the grace of God, and that grace is sufficient to keep him from evil, but their statements of it are not always wise or right. Again, Calvinism teaches that if a man is once in Christ, he will certainly continue so to the end. The Wesleyans see the evil of this, and its inconsistency with many of the warnings of the Bible, and so they teach that a man may fall from a state of salvation and recover it again half-a-dozen times in the course of an hour, giving that place to temporary movable feelings which belongs properly to principles, or habits founded on principles, and elevating affections above the sense of duty, which nevertheless is the true basis and substratum of everything that is really good and high in morals or religion. I believe that the Wesleyans have done much good in England, and in the English colonies, as missionaries; but the individuals of them whom I have

known seem to me not fully to apprehend that the way of the cross is not only the way in which Jesus walked for us, but also the only way in which we can walk with Him, and that He was a man of sorrows, not that we might be exempt from sorrows, but that we might suffer with Him and sorrow with Him, in the same spirit and to the same result.

As Wesleyanism rose out of Calvinism, so Quakerism rose out of Puritanism. The doctrinal creed of the Puritans appeared to George Fox, the apostle of Quakerism, to smother the spirit under the letter; against this he protested, and in his protest he threw away forms and letters altogether, making religion to consist in the simple relation of each individual soul with God, independent of positive facts, including truths revealed by God in any other way than that of the individual conscience. I can understand in the same way that Madame Guyon, and the race of mystics that have risen up in the bosom of Popery, have been generated by the over-working and outside-working of the Roman Catholic system, and they teach over-passivity in opposition to over-activity. Thus man oscillates. What a comfort it is to know that God really desires the good of every soul that He hath made, and that He really guides every soul that waits upon Him in humility and sincerity, notwithstanding its imperfect or fallacious theories. Let us not make haste, but let us abide in Jesus, desiring to be educated by God, so that we may not only wish to walk in the way of righteousness, but that we may also discern wherein righteousness consists, and patiently and lovingly walk in it.

I am very grateful for M. Vinet's letter, and when I think that I have anything to say to him, which is worth telling him, I shall write to him. I feel most deeply for

him in his present circumstances, and I remember him before God, asking help for him according to his need. I love them both most affectionately, and I believe that he seeks not his own glory, but the will of God, which gives me confidence that he will be guided in that wisdom which is from above. I am very anxious to see his book. I seldom meet with any striking thought without thinking of him, and wishing to convey it to him. I have just now a sentence before me which I shall transcribe for him: "The will to the deed, the inward principle to the outward act, is as the kernel to the shell; but yet, in the first place, the shell is necessary for the kernel, and that by which it is commonly known; and in the next place, as the shell comes first, and the kernel grows gradually and hardens within it, so is it with the moral principle in man. Legality precedes morality in every individual, even as the Jewish dispensation preceded the Christian in the education of the world at large." . . .—Yours most affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

114. TO MRS. BURNETT.

LINLATHEN, *Feb.* 2, 1841.

. . . WHAT a wonderful scene this world is, considered as a school in which God is educating immortal beings for eternity! Look to Africa, to Asia, to America, even to Europe, even to England, London, Manchester, Glasgow, Dundee, as schools for eternity! It is a great mystery. The God of infinite love, who so loved every individual man as to give His only-begotten Son to die for him and to be his living Head, who has all wisdom and all power, He looks on this strange sight and lets it proceed. Assuredly then there is a purpose of wise love in all this which will yet be manifested. That is the blue sky beyond the clouds. We must by faith pierce the

cloud, and strengthen our hearts by looking to the end of the Lord; or, as Gambold says,

> "Thus all the sequel is well weighed.
> I cast myself upon Thine aid,
> A sea where none can sink."

"He hath shut in all under unbelief, that He might have mercy on all." No wonder that such an idea drew from the apostle the exclamation which follows, "O the depth," etc. . . .

We have had a great many deaths lately amongst our friends. One of my first continental friends, a Genevese lady, died of a paralytic stroke lately.[1] She was on her knees praying before going to bed, and she was one who prayed in spirit and in truth. It was a sweet way of dying. . . .—Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

115. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LINLATHEN, *Feb.* 27, 1841.

BELOVED FRIEND,—I cannot tell you how grateful to my heart your love is, and all the expressions of it. I like ties of kindness—outward and visible signs of the unseen spirit of love—special motives for prayer, binding souls together in the spirit.

My dear brother, I value your love much, both as *your* love and as *God's* love. I have confidence in the truth and stability of your love, and all here are of one mind in the appreciation of you and your affection.

Give my affectionate love to your dear wife. We do indeed not find it difficult to rejoice with her and you on this event.[2] May the good Father bless the parents and

[1] Madame Cramer.

[2] The birth of a son called Thomas Erskine. See "Memorials of J. M'Leod Campbell, D.D.," vol. i. p. 159.

the children, and make your Thomas Erskine a better man and a wiser than him after whom he is named. I should be sorry to see myself reproduced entire in any human being; and if I thought that the name could effect such a thing, I should positively object to its being imposed on the young immortal; but I have the trust that *the names* into which he is to be baptized, is the name which will be the mould of his character and the fountain of his spiritual life—the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. . .—Yours ever most affectionately,

T. Erskine.

116. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

Linlathen, *March* 23, 1841.

Dear Mr. Carlyle,—Your kindly thoughts are highly valued, and your expression of them always most acceptable.

I thank you for your sympathy in the matter of my eyes, which I should not feel so heavy an affliction as I do, were I able to hold that converse with my own thoughts for which you give me credit. I believe that it is to teach me that lesson that my present circumstances have been allotted to me; but I am a slow scholar, most apt to fall into some form or other of castle-building, the resort and the nourishment of an indolent mind. I think of that word of Jesus Christ, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, O Father, glorify thy Son," etc., and am compelled to conclude that my life is no following of His life.

Proceed with your Puritans, it is the work given you to do. Blessed are they who see a work set before them, and are conscious of a capacity to do it. It is a great undertaking to lift them out of the rubbish; if you love them well enough you will find out their mystery of life. Why do you love them? If you could explain to yourself and

to others that *why*, the business would be well advanced, for it is no dead thing that you love. Of course you know Baxter's Life by himself. One feels provoked that he does not tell us more of the things which he saw and touched every day, especially about Cromwell himself. It is a curious thing that he says about "his natural hilarity being such as other men have only when they have taken a cup too much." He says also, what seems opposed to other testimony, that he "was of excellent parts for affection and oratory." He was one of the Jötuns, or what do you call the Norse Titans?

When you make your escape from London, pray come down, you and dear Mrs. Carlyle, by a Dundee steamer—they are the best—and come here and inquire after mountains and ocean places, which can make the mind free, if such places there are. In this neighbourhood the industrial Jötun has blown his poisonous breath upon everything. We have a stream near the house, which I remember clear and sweet, and full of active joyful life; now it is like the sentina of an apothecary's or chemist's establishment, foaming with unhealthy artificial froth, and reeking forth evil smells, and substituting ill-omened rats for the gay mottled par; and tall chimneys vomit out pestiferous smoke. *Enfin*, this is to be explained and received on the same principle as the failure of eyesight.

We have a sea near us, the Firth of Tay, along which run for many miles delicious links, of sweet sward and most fantastical miniatures of hills and valleys, through which I used to ride and walk, holding intercourse with nature as best I might; but the Jötun has practised a railroad through the heart of it, which has plucked out the heart of its mystery. Nevertheless there are still trees and fields here, which in the appropriate season become green and tell their wondrous tale, as others of

their kind do elsewhere, and we have the blue vault and the high stars, and liberty of access to the Highest, debarred only by our own evil.

I am very sorry that Mrs. C. is invalided. I feel gratitude and affection to you both for your kindness to me.

I have got your Lectures, and my sister Mrs. Paterson kindly reads to me, so I have the use of eyes, though not my own. There are advantages as well as disadvantages in this way of it. Did you hear any of Scott's Political Lectures?[1] I think they must have been very good; words in them for the masses of Manchester and Glasgow, as well as for the rulers.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

117. TO MADAME FOREL.

LONDON, *June* 28, 1841.

DEAR FRIEND,—I have received your packet, and return you many thanks. I have also received Vinet's *Nouveaux Discours*,[2] into which I have looked a little with much pleasure; but as I am at present alone, separated from those of my family to whom I am obliged to be indebted for much of my knowledge of books, in consequence of the weakness of my own eyes, I have not made much progress in them yet. I was very much struck by the second, "Le méchant et le jour de la calamité." The certainty, the inevitable, infallible certainty, of the connection between moral good and happiness—moral evil and misery—is an immense doctrine, full of important results. The gospel does not weaken this doctrine; faith in Jesus Christ does not deliver us from this eternal law, that "verily it must be ill with the wicked," but teaches us to approve and love that law, even in its application to

[1] On Chartism and Socialism. See Discourses by Alexander J. Scott, pp. 130, 160.

[2] "Nouveaux Discours sur quelques sujets religieux." Paris, 1841.

ourselves, and carries us safe through it, to the other side, where its fruits grow. Let us be patient, dear friend, and trust in the Lord with all our heart, for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not. I am very sorry that your eyes are troubling you; I have nevertheless sent you a book, a work of my own, which I have spoken to you about, and from which that extract about "accepting our punishment" is taken—*The Brazen Serpent*—which you may let dear Mme. Vinet see. I have also sent a book for M. Vinet, called "The Kingdom of Christ," which I am sure he will read with interest, although he will disagree much and often with it. The writer is a friend of mine, whom I value highly, as a man of great worth and great intellectual power.[1] . . . Alas! dear and honoured Madame Necker:[2] "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." . . .—Yours ever affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

118. TO MADAME DE STAËL.

Sept. 8, 1841.

WE must be in earnest in the business of crucifying the flesh. We must die with Jesus. His death-pang must pass through us, that we may truly partake of His life.[3] We must not be too tender of our own feelings. . . .

Our wisdom cannot judge God's. Our wisdom is to acknowledge God's wisdom, and to wait on Him that He would reveal it to us. What you say of your mother

[1] F. D. Maurice. [2] Authoress of "L'Education Progressive."

[3] "*Accepting our punishment* is just being of one mind with God, in hating and condemning sin, and longing for its destruction. It is submitting ourselves to the process of its destruction, and setting our seals to the righteousness of God in the process. *It is the death-pang of the crucified Head thrilling through the member and accomplishing in it what it did in the Head*"—*The Brazen Serpent*, 2d edition, p. 48.

praying for me on the 1st June is very striking to me. I do not recollect anything in particular to mark that day, but I learn this from her prayer, that on that day, as on every day, most important concerns for my soul were transacted without my being aware of their importance. Every negligence in the inner history of my thoughts and desires, every conflict between the Spirit of God and the spirit of self-indulgence within me, every inward confessing of Christ as the Lord of my being, though bearing no outward sign, is, I am well assured, of unspeakable importance in the sight of God, and fitted to call forth the intense prayers of all those in whose hearts the Spirit of God is acting as an intercessor for others. And it is a painful indication of the little sense that I have of the mind of the Spirit concerning me, that such prayers can be made for me by others, whilst I remain myself so cold and apathetic. I had another friend, also now dead, who used to tell me that she at particular times felt constrained to pray for me, as if I were in great spiritual danger. She was one who lived very near God, and prayed much, and I used to wonder that I was not able to connect any felt state of difficulty in my own mind with those calls to prayer in my behalf which she experienced. At last I came to the conclusion that these prayers did not mark any particular difficulty in my path, but only that the general and continual difficulty of every day was then specially made known to her soul, that I might, by hearing of it, be stirred up to a greater activity of prayer and vigilance, seeing how critical my condition appeared to the loving Spirit of God.

119. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, *Nov.* 24, 1841.

. . . I HOPE you are proceeding with Oliver's life. He was

a grand fellow, and full of good English domestic life, I am persuaded, of which no man could require a better proof than his calling up one of the maids of his house, whom he knew to be a Quaker, and telling her that George Fox was in town, for that he had met him that day. His appointment of Hale, too, is good. But it is very difficult to collect specimens of the primary formation of such a man. It would be pleasant to light on an early or at all events an inner collection of letters—an interior *nota Falerni*—to show what he was before he made the move, or what he *really* was after it. There have been a good many rather considerable breakers of formulas; do you know any good makers of them? or do they only grow themselves unmade? I was struck by a dictum of Coleridge the other day, in his *Literary Remains*,[1] on this subject; he remarks that the shell comes before the kernel, and is the prepared receptacle for it, to nourish and protect it, in its germination. To get good shells is still more important, as it is much more difficult, than to break bad ones. . . . Believe me to be, with sincere wishes for your welfare, and with much gratitude for your kindness, yours, T. ERSKINE.

120. TO M. CRAMER MALLET.

LINLATHEN, *Feb.* 25, 1842.

MON CHER MONSIEUR,—Je vais vous écrire en Anglais afin que je puisse m'entretenir avec vous plus à mon aise, et parceque je sais bien que Madame ou *une de ces dames* aura la bonté d'être mon interprète. . . .

The distress and poverty in all our manufacturing districts are appalling. As yet, the sufferers have shown great patience, but the question of the Corn Laws is a very agitating question at such a time, especially as there is no want of public haranguers who represent to the

[1] Vol. i. p. 338.

people that all their present distress arises out of the Corn Laws, and that these laws are made by the landowners merely for their own interest. It is a large subject and an intricate one, and one which is not to be decided without taking into consideration a great many circumstances which are generally overlooked by those who look at us from a distance.

Your account of your own revolution is very interesting and instructive. This is the age of revolutions; we may expect them everywhere. The intelligence, or rather the intellectual activity, of the lower classes of society has made a prodigious advance within the last fifty years; and intelligence is power; but the moral culture and the religious culture has not kept pace with the intellectual activity; and without a right state of morals power cannot be exercised well. Here lies the general difficulty. Men insist on judging of everything, though they have neither sufficient extent of knowledge nor sufficient unselfishness to judge aright. I believe that we are near some great catastrophe; there is no reverence left for anything which has been considered venerable by our fathers, and love, *la charité*, the only true bond for uniting men, either as families or nations, is fast disappearing, and no bond is left but selfishness, or sense of common interest, which cannot stand; for men's interests, or their views of their interests, will be continually opposing them to each other.

Farewell, dear friends. I think of you all with much love, as my brothers and sisters. T. ERSKINE.

121. TO MRS. BURNETT.

2 GLOUCESTER PLACE, NEW ROAD, LONDON,
June 27, 1842.

DEAR MRS. BURNETT,— . . . I was yesterday at Woolwich and heard Mr. Scott. . . . He preached on the

words, "If ye be led of the Spirit ye are not under the law." He showed how little men seemed even to aim at being in the Spirit; how contented they were, even those who seemed religious, with doing things, not in the love of them, but because they were commanded by God to do them, and how they carried this same principle into the doctrines which they held as their creed, for they thus held them, not because they saw their truth in the light of the Spirit, but because they conceived that this creed was prescribed to them by God. He desired that he might not be misunderstood, as if he had said that a man was to do nothing, and to believe nothing but what he himself loved or saw; but he only wished men to consider that so long as they were doing it in this way they were doing it not in the Spirit but under the law.

When a man is not led by the Spirit he ought to be under the law. It is his next best state, but it is not his Christian calling. I feel that this is a most important subject, though perhaps so shortly stated it may not come with much conviction to your mind. I scarcely ever met with a person who did not give me the impression that he held his creed under the law, referring to particular texts, but not to a Spirit, apparently not even seeing the desirableness of it. Sometimes I used to feel this even with your loved and venerated father; at the same time there was no man that I had then met with who was half so free, or with whom I felt so free to say what was the feeling or the conviction of my heart, without fear of being charged or suspected of heresy. . . .—Ever yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

122. TO MRS. MAURICE.

2 GLO'STER PLACE, NEW ROAD, *24th July.*

DEAR MRS. MAURICE,—I have taken the liberty of sending you a copy of Madame Necker's work on Educa-

tion, of which we spoke the other day. It is a pleasure to me to look back upon the intellectual and sociable and eminently earnest old lady. She had been for many years in a great measure withdrawn from society by her deafness, and a certain desolateness of feeling connected partly with that infirmity, and still more by a sense of the vanity of temporal things, and by family sorrows; the chiefest and sorest of which was the death of a much-loved daughter, who, I think, was burned to death. She had a heart for friendship, and delighted in intimate communions, one of which she enjoyed to a very great degree, with Madame de Broglie, the daughter of her old friend Madame de Staël, who, after the death of her own mother, and increasingly after the death of Madame Necker's daughter, became a daughter and more than a daughter to her. The chapter on married life, in the third volume, is very much indebted to her hand, I believe.

My acquaintance with this old lady, and my pleasurable remembrance of it, make me wish to introduce her to you and Mr. Maurice. I hope to see him and you once more before I leave London, which I propose doing next week. —I remain, with great regard, yours most truly,

T. Erskine.

123. TO JAMES MACKENZIE, ESQ.

Linlathen, *Sept.* 5, 1842.

My dearest Friend,—It is a grief to me to have so little to do with one whom I love so well. I have often intended to write to you, when things or thoughts, or persons that interested me came in my way; but indolence or something else prevented me, and left me the mere longing to communicate with you. I spent about three months this spring and summer in London, having gone up primarily

to hear Scott lecture on his old subject, the mutual relations of religion and philosophy. I felt an increasing value for his views on the subject, and an increasing admiration for his talents as a lecturer. I afterwards heard him deliver two lectures on Schism.[1] He began by showing wherein true unity consists. God is the only real centre, and separation from Him the only real schism. Then our union to Him must be spiritual, and therefore schism cannot consist in a difference of form, as unity cannot consist in a similarity of form. These lectures were taken by a shorthand writer, and perhaps you have seen them, through Miss Paterson or some other. I went down to Woolwich pretty often to hear him preach on Sundays, always with great satisfaction.

Madame de Staël came over when I was in London, which was a great pleasure to me. I have gotten from her some very beautiful productions of Mme. de Broglie's pen, which I should like you to read, but of which I cannot give copies. One is an account of Mrs. Fry's visit to Paris, full of living spirit. Madame de Staël has also been kind enough to give me a most striking portrait of her mother, which I should like you to see. Surely you can spare a day or two, now when the Queen's visit has necessarily thrown all loyal subjects idle, so that they may be at least their own masters as much as the turn-outs at Manchester. We are in a strange state nationally,—near some great explosion. There seems to be no law nor government. If things settle down of themselves, well and good, but there is no strong hand in the State to put them down. Come over before the break comes, that we may have a little quiet anticipation of the joy of the kingdom which cannot be shaken.—With best regards to your ladies, I ever am, yours most affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

[1] See Discourses by Alexander J. Scott, pp. 230-280.

124. TO MISS ANN DUNDAS.

LINLATHEN, *Sept.* 25, 1842.

MY DEAR ANN,—I am most thankful for the accounts which you have received of the circumstances attending the death of your dearest brother, the most amiable of men. I believe that his ear would be more open to those with whom he had never been in the habit of discussing and disputing about Christianity, than to his own friends, and therefore, that although it seems to us sad that so loving a being should have died at a distance from his kindred, yet it was of the mercy of God. There certainly flowed through his heart a deeper stream of natural love than ever I saw in any man, and who can doubt that that stream is yet to be holy water in the kingdom of God? I loved him well, and yet I feel as if I had not made enough of him when I had him. I hope now to profit by the remembrance of him, especially in the lesson of love—disinterested, noble love. Dearest Willy,—I feel for all of you his sisters and brothers, and desire to have the bond between us strengthened and tightened, and not weakened by this event. And I hope also, my dear friends, that you yourselves may profit in this same way, by a stroke which is intended by Him who inflicted it to go very deep. The great lesson of love is, *to die to one's-self.* Christ's love is always shown through *death,* just because the death of the *self* is both the great expression and the only way into love. We cannot love without dying to self, and we cannot die to self without love. The two things go together inseparably; in fact, they are opposite faces of the same thing—and that thing is, *eternal life.* I hope you will all pray much, and keep your hearts and your lips in humility and watchfulness, not thinking it any degradation to humble yourselves before each other, and to submit one to another in the fear of

God. O Ann, the time past may suffice us all to have wrought our own will, which is iniquity; and now let us begin again our journey and our life.

I am thankful to have seen so much of him here, so that I have associated him with many places in-doors and out-of-doors. I know no one except Davie who had the same delight in living over past days, and recalling past friends; the *roots* of his heart went deep into our common nature, and entwined themselves with all his kind, beginning with his relations. It flatters our personal feelings—our vanity—to be loved for our own personal qualities, but it is *wholesome* to know that we are loved for something not personal, but belonging to us as members of one family, of one race, children of one Father, redeemed by one Saviour, who is the common Head of all. Dear friends, Ann, Mary, Eliza, Jemima—let us be thus minded, and if in anything we be otherwise minded, let us humbly seek wisdom and strength from our Head. Farewell.—Yours ever affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

125. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, *Oct.* 7, 1842.

MY DEAR RUTHERFURD,—The thought of having you here is a great pleasure to me. I have been intending to write to you a letter of urgency on this matter for some time back, and the circumstance to which you refer, the death of that most amiable and most affectionate of men,[1] increases in me the desire of getting nearer and keeping nearer to old friends. The last time that I was in your house he was there; he came separately. I was first, and John announced me under William's name, and when he came John announced him under mine. I never knew a more generous heart, and I have scarcely ever known any

[1] William Dundas, Esq.

one who appreciated, as he did, the value of human kindness in all its gradations. Full of interest intellectually, and still fuller of interest morally, we shall not look upon his like again. Those who have known him nearly will not easily find his place filled. My dear friend, the world is passing away, but I feel that nothing which is truly worth keeping can be lost. Faith in God implies faith in this. God is the element in which we were made to live, and in that element alone can we breathe freely. If we lived there, and met each other there, we should feel that there is in truth neither death nor separation. The value of any true disinterested affection is immeasurable by any earthly measure. . . .—Yours ever, T. E.

126. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LINLATHEN, *October* 15, 1842.

BELOVED BROTHER,—We rejoice with you, and trust that you will be taught to receive in this new gift all that your Father intends for you in it. We are thankful that dear Mrs. Campbell is now so well. Are we not in His hands, and are not His hands a Father's hands?

I had proposed being in Glasgow before now, and even I had thought of going to Oban and seeing your dear father,[1] and refreshing my spirit by the sight of heathery mountains, which I have not looked on for many years. But man does not direct his own way, and it is neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem that we are to worship the Father. I have been kept at home by the feeling that at this time of general destitution all those who have any property or any capability of being helpful to their fellow-creatures by giving them employment or otherwise should be at their posts. . . . You know that Mrs. Paterson natur-

[1] Dr. Campbell of Kilninver, who died in his sleep, 17th January 1843. See "Memorials of Dr. M'Leod Campbell," vol. i. pp. 166, 172.

ally cares for you. This is the season of the death of her Daidie, and she lives over the whole history as the marked days pass on, marked by sorrow and yet marked by love.

With kindest love from all here to you all, I remain ever yours, T. ERSKINE.

127. TO MR. AND MRS. MACNABB.

6 MANOR PLACE, EDINBURGH, *Dec.* 29, 1842.

VERY DEAR FRIENDS,—. . . I have been surrounded for the last six months with starving unemployed labourers, and I have been giving them work, to an amount varying from twenty to thirty; which being just so much above my usual expenditure, I find myself tolerably drained; and besides, the faces of those whom I have been obliged to refuse employment to seem to me to reproach me for every shilling which I spend out of my own neighbourhood. You can understand this, and also the increased demands of all the local charities—Infirmary, Clothes Societies, etc.

I intend to go west to see your beloved brother[1] before I return home. It seems as if the Church of Scotland threw away its peace when it threw him out of its bosom. What confusion has there been ever since! What indeed can unite men together, but the sense of the universal love of God, which that Church rejected in the person of him who was honoured to preach it?

. . . Oh what a blessed secret it is that the will of God is the law of man's being—his true element, out of which his spirit sickens and dies; and that, as a water-plant can only thrive and have its true liberty of growth in the water, so man has his true liberty only in the will of God.—Yours (both) most affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

[1] Mrs. Macnabb was a sister of Dr. M'Leod Campbell. Her daughter married the son of Captain Paterson, who took his uncle's name after his decease, and is now the proprietor of Linlathen.

128. TO MRS. BURNETT.

Feb. 4, 1843.

. . . I REJOICE in being the introducer of Vinet to any one who can appreciate him. Don't send him back; keep him as a friend. I am at present reading a very interesting book of his, recently published, "Sur la Manifestation des Convictions Religieuses," which leads him to the question, "Whether there ought to be such a thing as an Established Church," which he thinks ought to be answered in the negative. I have not yet reached that part of the book which treats that subject, but what I have read is admirable. He considers the purpose of God in the institution of society as a spiritual education for all the members of it, which purpose requires the frank avowal of our moral and religious convictions. When a thing is said or done before us which we think wrong, he says that we feel our own spirits injured if we are prevented by any selfish motive from expressing our disapprobation, and we at the same time deprive the other party of the appeal to his conscience which such an expression would make. He speaks most feelingly of the heartless state of society, where everything that is most intimate and inward to the conscience and the heart is studiously suppressed, and where, consequently, all life becomes a dead conventionality.

I feel very much for your two depressed and melancholy neighbours. There is one suggestion that I would make to you in relation to such cases. I believe that the expression "promises of the Bible" is often misunderstood, so as to convey the idea that the love of God to man is conditional upon his catching at it or taking hold of it. To us is born a Saviour; that is no promise, it is the accomplishment of the first promise. When a child is born in a

family he is by birth the brother of the other children of the family; they have nothing to do in order to make him their brother. They cannot benefit by their relation unless they receive him as a brother, but the relation itself stands independent of them. So also God is our Father; and in the gift has been manifested the actual and honest purpose of God towards us and all men, which we may frustrate but not unmake. . . . I saw your youths, but had no opportunity, or, alas! took no opportunity of intimate intercourse, such as Vinet speaks of, as the debt which man owes to man. The fear of doing it wrong weighs with me now much more than it used to do, so that I require a very distinct opening to induce me to enter into anything like religious conversation. If everything which we thought and said and did were, as it ought to be, a part of that worship which ought to be the business of life (for are we not called to be priests, offering up continually the sacrifice of ourselves?), it would not be felt to be a transition when we spoke directly of a truth which was always substantially uppermost in the mind. I know "Proverbial Philosophy," and like many things in it. Have you ever read any of Carlyle's writings? By the by, I don't remember whether I spoke to you of him when I was at Kemnay. His History of the French Revolution and his miscellaneous works and "Sartor Resartus" are all very remarkable, sometimes startling. I love the man; . . . he has a real belief in the invisible, which in these railroad and steam-engine days is a great matter. He sees and condemns the evil and baseness of living in the lower part of our nature instead of living in the higher. He is full of thoughts, of genius, and of high imagination.

129. TO JAMES MACKENZIE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, *June* 7, 1843.

BELOVED MACKENZIE,—Are you really coming to see us, or are you content, and willing that we should be content, with speaking of it, or thinking of it? We are in the middle of much, and may expect strange results soon, and it does me good to see or hear a temperate man, who believes that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Father. I doubt not that a certain kind and degree of good may arise amongst certain persons out of our Scotch Kirk separation—more awakened thought, more zeal,—but I fear also more judging, more spiritual pride, etc.—as in the much and perhaps overlauded days of the Covenant and the hill-side.

I have been reading Carlyle's "Past and Present," out of which two elements he rears a horoscope of the future. He thinks that our great want is that of a true aristocracy—a strong intelligent domineering aristocracy in its two forms of governing and teaching. We need men who will "mak' us for to know it," like Sir Harry, and who will also "mak' us for to do it." These are our great desiderata, and he seems to hope much from men coming to be sensible that these are our needs. . . .—With best regards to your ladies, yours ever, T. ERSKINE.

130. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, *Nov.* 8, 1843.

DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—I received the newspaper addressed by your hand as a testimony that you had survived the voyage to London in a capacity, so far, of discharging the duties of a human being. Soon after you left us a friend of mine, who would like to know you, and whom you, I think, would like to know, James Mackenzie, son of the

"Man of Feeling," came here. I spoke to him of your purposed History of Oliver Cromwell, on which he recollected having read something rather characteristic of the said Oliver in the "Coltness Papers," published lately by the Maitland Club, and he promised when he went home to look out for the passage, and to send me the distinct reference, that I might transmit it to you to be used or abused according to your own judgment. He has not only sent the reference, but transcribed the passage, which I enclose to you.[1] I think that there must have been a considerable self-evidencing power in Oliver's religion which could have in so short a time overcome the prejudices of the good lady of Alertown. His interest in the *maiger* young man and his recommendation of Montpellier are also good from a man who was not brought up in the kingly habit of buying and paying people by courteous words.

Hitherto our winter has been most gentle. Our trees are at this moment passing through a beautiful euthanasia, covering the ground with rich mosaic. We expect our sister Mrs. Stirling home to-day from her long absence at a house of mourning. This year has made more such houses in our circle of friends than usual. Give my best regards to Mrs. Carlyle, and believe me to be yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

131. EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS TO MADAME DE STAËL.

Sept. 20, 1843.

. . . YOU mistake my character very much if you suppose that I live free from the influence of visible things. I am continually called to act amongst them, and I feel it a continual and a most painful difficulty to determine what

1 "The Coltness Collections," pp. 9, 10, quoted in "Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches," vol. ii. p. 272.

is the path of duty. I am thus often in a state of indecision, and very often also after having acted I condemn the choice I had made, and wish I had acted otherwise. You understand all the misery connected with such a temper. Indeed, it often makes me feel weary and heavy laden, and it also makes me feel how very little I realise the privilege of having Jesus as my head and counsellor and guide, and yet I know that He is indeed all these to me, and that I shall one day be delivered from this bondage of corruption into the liberty wherewith the Son maketh free. The filial spirit, the Son's spirit, is the free spirit which enters into the Father's mind, and knows His will, and finds that will its food and joy. The time is short, our redemption draweth nigh; let us fight the good fight of faith, and take hold of eternal life, which indeed is nothing else than the loving will of our Father, during the few remaining days of our pilgrimage here.

Christmas 1843.

THE history of every family and of every individual is a deep tragedy; for sin is in the world, and there is no other deliverance from sin but by the way of sorrow—sorrow administered by love and received in love. So that this life is given up to the development of the sacred mystery of sorrow. It is by sorrow that God calls the prodigal to think of his true home, and it is by sorrow that He perfects His saints.

. . . When we feel pain or uneasiness in our bodies, we naturally refer it to some internal malady, and we look out for a remedy which may remove it. But when we feel pain or uneasiness in our minds we are disposed to refer it, not to any malady in the mind itself, but to the circumstances in which we are placed, and thus men are employed rather in attempting to change their circumstances than in endeavouring to cure their souls.

132. TO M. CRAMER MALLET.

LINLATHEN, *Dec.* 26, 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . All through Europe the lower classes of the people have learned that they have rights; but they have not yet learned that the real political good of man is to be well governed, and not self-governed. They suppose that these two things are one. The gospel that they would desire is, Every man his own king; and that other gospel which is next neighbour to it, Every man his own God; whereas the true gospel is, You are not your own, but bought with a price. Submit yourselves to this rule. God's promised blessing to the world is a righteous king; see Isa. xxxii. and Ps. lxxii. and cx. . . .—Yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

133. TO M. GAUSSEN.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, *April* 10, 1844.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—You must think me very unmindful of all the friendship and love which I have received at your hands, if you judge of me by my irregularity in writing; but I hope that you do not so judge of me. I hope that you have confidence that I feel bound to you by a tie which cannot be broken—the eternal bond of God's love. I often go back in memory to Satigny, and collect there many dear ones: your mother and sister and daughter, and Perrot and the young missionaries from the Bâle seminary, Miss Greene, and others who have gone hence. I see your venerable little church, surrounded with its *marronniers*. I walk in your garden, and look at your mountains and your river. Oh, my friend, what a privilege it is to know Him who is the Maker of all things as our Father and our God, who calls us to be partakers in His own nature, by receiving Jesus and walking in Him. I

hope before long to see you again, but the state of our country at present makes me feel it to be my duty to remain at my own post. . . .—Yours ever,

T. ERSKINE.

134. TO THE REV. A. J. SCOTT.

LINLATHEN, *July* 22, 1844.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I feel it indeed a great disappointment not to meet you at this time. We had thought that you might have made out Perth, and then taken the steamer down the river; but I am quite sensible that any over-exertion might be attended with lamentable consequences. That you have yourself felt it a disappointment is at the same time gratifying and grievous. If it had been possible, I wish you had been here this last week, during which we have enjoyed the refreshing babbling of that most amiable of men, James Mackenzie. I who weary of myself in other men's company, find myself always renovated and restored by his free natural current, which runs out of him like a child's prattle. If he has the same effect on you that he has on me, I think the prospect of benefit—even physical benefit—from his society might almost have outweighed the risk of a journey here. His tenderness of nature, his exquisite *loving* sense of the ludicrous, his *besoin* of uttering his thoughts and feelings, not to mention the infinity of his resources, in taste and intelligence of all sorts, and in personal anecdote, give a charm to him which I never saw in any one else.[1] He has got a beautiful day, I am glad to see, for his voyage home. So beautiful indeed does the weather look, that I feel tempted to take a run

[1] Yet another and deeper bond united these two friends. In 1824 they met at Rome. Mr. Mackenzie, then a thoughtless youth, was prostrated by fever, and lay for weeks in a critical condition. Mr. Erskine's attentions were incessant. The happy fruit of them was an entire change in Mr. Mackenzie's thoughts and sentiments, and a perfect spiritual harmony ever after between them.

to Stirlingshire, where the beauty of the weather is met half-way by the beauty of the country, that I might shake hands with you again in our own country, before I leave Britain for an uncertain time. . . . T. E.

135. TO MRS. MACHAR.

LINLATHEN, *May* 27, 1844.

THE present time is a very trying one. I did not feel myself called on to take any part in this movement (the Disruption), but I always expressed my conviction that the movement was one more of a political than of a religious character. God is Love. I feel that is what is wanted universally. I desire to have my own heart ever filled out of that fountain; it is a love which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; but most assuredly it is not the true love if it forgets tenderness towards those whom we think in error.

136. TO DR. WYLIE OF CARLUKE.

. . . THE great body of the people here have followed Mr. Miller[1] out of the Church, rather (I believe) on the ground that he is a good man, and making a sacrifice for conscience' sake, than on any personal convictions of their own that the principle on which he acts is right. I believe, also, that it is generally felt that the rights of the people are asserted by the seceding ministers, which weighs a good deal. The letters from your elders are most touching. I hope there are many such people in the ranks of the Secession; but I scarcely think that in this county, at least in the rural parts of it, such are to be found. And as they are most touching even to me, who know nothing of the writers, they must be heart-breaking to you. I am surprised that men like these should have allowed an outward thing to acquire such importance in their eyes.

[1] The Rev. Samuel Miller of Monifieth.

CHAPTER XII.

Letters from the Continent—1844-46.

In the autumn of 1844 the establishment at Linlathen was temporarily broken up. The experiment had been tried of making it the home of Mr. Erskine's two sisters as well as his own. The state however of Mrs. Paterson's health had become such that this idea was now finally given up, she and her husband going in search of a warmer climate. Mrs. Stirling was prepared to part with her jointure-house of Cadder and live permanently at Linlathen. Ere setting up the new *régime* over which she was for many years so happily to preside, she accompanied her brother on a visit to the Continent. Partly owing to her being with him and taking share in the home correspondence, and still more to the letters written at this time by Mr. Erskine to his "dear Cousin Rachel" having been destroyed, there are but few letters of this period to present.

Rome was reached in the beginning of winter, and soon after his arrival Mr. Erskine received a communication from Lausanne in which he was specially interested. The relations betwixt the civil authorities and the Church of the Canton de Vaud had become so complicated that on the 11th November 1844 M. Vinet addressed a letter to

the Council of State informing them that he should feel himself obliged at the end of the year to resign the office of Professor of Practical Theology in the Academy of Lausanne. Writing to Mr. Erskine to inform him of this resolution, after referring to a chronic malady of his son which shut up against him any public career, M. Vinet says:—

"Et moi qui ai une carrière, je me vois sur le point d'être contraint de la quitter. Ma place de professeur m'impose des fonctions qui impliquent la reconnaissance du système ecclésiastique qui régit depuis cinq ans l'église nationale de ce pays, et contre lequel j'ai protesté en renonçant à ma qualité de membre du clergé. Or je le suis encore par un bout, et je ne puis le rester sans avoir à me reprocher une inconséquence que personne, je le crains, n'expliquerait à l'honneur de mon désintéressement ou de la fermeté de mes convictions. Il est bon de vous dire, bien cher monsieur, que ma démission de membre du clergé national est indépendante de mon système sur l'église et l'état, et que, quand je croirais à la légitimité de cette union, je ne m'en séparerais pas moins d'un gouvernement ecclésiastique et d'une loi dont le principe est cyniquement matérialiste. Il est fâcheux, pour moi du moins, qu'en sécularisant la faculté de théologie, on ait, par mégarde peut-être, laissé pendre à nos charges de professeurs un lambeau d'attributions ecclésiastiques qui font de nous, malgré nous, malgré moi du moins, des fonctionnaires de l'église; mais la chose est ainsi: je ne puis la changer. Ce n'est pas tout: avant que la loi fût faite, avant que mon livre fût écrit, moins d'une année après mon entrée en charge, j'avais conçu des doutes pénibles sur ma vocation au professorat de théologie. . . .

"Laissez-moi vous dire combien je dois à un livre qui vient de vous, quoique vous ne me l'ayez pas envoyé: 'The Brazen Serpent. (Le serpent d'airain.)' Que de choses qu'il me

semble avoir toujours pensées ! Oh ! s'il m'était donné de sentir avec vous comme il m'a été donné de penser avec vous ! . . .

"Voilà mon papier rempli et mon cœur n'est pas vidé. Il ne s'y passe rien, ni dans ma tête non plus, que je ne voulusse vous dire. Surtout je voudrais vous entendre."

137. TO M. VINET.

CORSO, ROME, *Dec.* 28, 1844.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—In reading over your most interesting letter, the only comfort that presented itself to me was that "not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Father," and that "the hairs of your head are all numbered," and so utterly unhelpful did I feel myself, that I did not like even to answer you, but thought that, like Job's friends at their first meeting him, I should sit silent beside you. But though I cannot give you any light or strength to guide and sustain you, I can give you a brother's sympathy, and I can present your burden along with my own to Him who has said, "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you." It is indeed a most complicated case of sorrow and perplexity—your poor position, the feeling that consistency requires you to give up your professorship, yet knowing that it is just the place for which your faculties and character fit you, and that in it you have more apparent opportunity of doing good than in any other;—all this aggravated by a nervous state of body, affecting your mind. I cannot venture to suggest anything, except this—that if your conviction that you ought to renounce your chair arises from the apprehension that *others may think* that your continuing to hold it is the result of a mercenary feeling in you, and not from a distinct perception of the rightness of such a step in your own conscience, you should

take means to ascertain whether such a feeling in others does exist to any extent. I could not wish you to remain for a moment in any situation where you could not look straight up to God, but I should be sorry that you left a situation in which He has placed you, from any other fear than that of opposing His will.

I am very thankful that you have got any good out of the "Brazen Serpent." During the time that I wrote it I was conscious of communion with God in my own spirit; and whether the view which I take of the history be just or not, I believe that it contains much of the meaning of Christianity. I think that I was mistaken in my impressions as to the appearances of the spiritual gifts; but that is of very little consequence, and perhaps my chief error in the book is that I give too much importance to them. I shall be delighted to receive the new edition of your discourses, having found them already helpful to me, and always finding your friendship, and every expression of it, a precious gift from the Giver of all good. I am also pleased that you have chosen such an occupation as the translation of à Kempis, the humility and meekness and heavenly-mindedness of the book are so true and living. . . .—Yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

After passing the winter in Rome, Mr. Erskine and his sister travelled by a circuitous route to Geneva, which they reached early in October.

138. TO MADAME FOREL.

FLORENCE, 29*th Nov.* 1845.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Many thanks for your book, which I have read with great interest. I think that it is calculated to be useful to many, the true state of a Christian in his daily walk with God in the inner man of the heart, is

so fully and constantly recognised in it, and all departures from that state are so thoroughly condemned as sins. We are so apt, through indolence, to form a low standard of Christianity to ourselves, and to hope that all is well with us, whilst we are not directly offending against a law of God in our thoughts and desires, although we are not entering heartily into His purpose with regard to ourselves and others, nor endeavouring to be fellow-workers with Him in that purpose—we are so apt thus to fall asleep, that it is good for us to hear the voice of a brother-man deploring and condemning things in himself as grievous sins, which we may have been allowing to pass unreproved in ourselves, and thus to be led to consider whether we have not been voluntarily permitting ourselves to fall asleep in the midst of our course.

There is an English book written by one John Foster, a Baptist lately dead, containing many profound and striking thoughts, one of the subjects treated is "on a man's writing memoirs of himself." In this essay he supposes the man to go through the whole journey of his life, and to note at each stage any conviction or habit or taste which he had acquired there in his advance forward, and to consider what it was that had been the direct occasion of his making this acquisition. The writer remarks here, how often, when we came to the conclusion, we should find on this review that the casual meeting with a fellow-creature, for whom, perhaps, we had no great respect, and whom we never saw but once, or the reading of a book which on the whole we disapproved of, and had not read again, had left indelible impressions on our character, whilst we had felt little influence from the presence of a Being whose relation to us was that of an ever present, ever loving, ever counselling Father, of whose wisdom we never presumed to doubt. I remember reading

that essay when I was seventeen or eighteen years of age, and feeling the truth of it very much; I felt how life was necessarily a progressive education of our character either for good or for evil, and that the responsibility connected with this our position was of such a solemn and overpowering weight that a continual receiving of help from on high was essential to our success, and a continual looking to God for that help was our first duty and our chief privilege. I determined also to keep a journal of my own history, but I gave it up, feeling that I did not do it *truly*.

. . . I am here at Florence enjoying the works of art very much. There are some beautiful frescos by Beato Angelico di Fiesole, which have given me special gratification, and edification also I should say; his pictures express the humility and the heavenly aspirations of a devout soul, far more than any paintings I ever saw; it is said that he never began to paint without praying for guidance and help. How profitable should we all be one to another if we thus did everything in the spirit of prayer; we should then be fulfilling God's purpose in creating us *after His own image*. . . . May the Lord be with you, dear friends.—Yours most affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

In the Tyrolese Bavaria, in a miserable little village inn on the borders of the Tegernsee, Mr. Erskine had in the preceding summer found an English gentleman, Mr. Wagner, lying with his leg dreadfully shattered, the carriage in which he and his family had been travelling having been overturned. Mr. Erskine remained some days with them, sympathising most tenderly, giving such help as he could, becoming acquainted with Dr. Foster and his wife,—a daughter of Jean Paul Richter, who were living in the neighbourhood.[1]

1 See "Memoir of Rev. George Wagner" (Cambridge, 1858), pp. 77, 78.

139. TO MR. WAGNER.

64 Via Sistina, Roma, *Jan.* 9, 1846.

My dear Sir,—I hope this letter will find you progressing onwards towards a perfect recovery. . . . Will you ask Miss Wagner, with my best regards, to let (Madame Foster) Richter's daughter know that I appreciate most highly the kindness of her intention of sending me her father's portrait, but that I entirely coincide with her husband's opinion that it ought not to go out of the family. In fact, though I should have rejoiced to have received it as an expression of love, yet I should also have rejoiced to have sent it back as an act of justice. Let her be told this, with my true heart-felt love, for such I bear her; and I shall remember her and my interview with her on the sweet shores of Tegernsee. . . .

140. TO MADAME DE STAËL.

Rome, *Jan.* 1846.

I believe that we should seek to have, and to be satisfied with, the sympathy of Christ; that is, the sympathy which strengthens and girds up the loins of the heart, whilst it gladdens. We need tonics to fit us for our life-battle—not emollients. Yet I find it an evil thing for me to live with those who can give me no sympathy, however good and worthy they may be; for they teach me to lock up my heart and all its feelings, which produces spiritual congestion, as bad for the soul as the congestion of blood is in any bodily organ. I know the value of Mrs. Rich as a sympathiser. I have sympathised with her, and been sympathised with by her, and I know that her love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth (1 Cor. xiii. 6), which gives sympathy its right tonic quality. I am persuaded that there are many hearts that contain

much sympathy, as the rock contains the water, without giving any sign of its presence until smitten by Moses' rod. . . .

141. TO MRS. BURNETT.

CARLSBAD, *July* 13, 1846.

I CAN see no possible, reasonable, and enduring peace for any human being in this world, except in the conviction that everything which happens in this world is appointed or permitted with a purpose of love to every one. It is a large school, and there are many scholars, and we are trained through each other. The parent is educated through the child, and the child through the parent; but the great fatherly Teacher sees and orders all, and does not permit that the education of the one should be at the expense of the other. A man injures me either by hurting my feelings or by evil suggestions, and counsel, and example, or by that general unsympathising manner which closes, or rather which has a tendency to close up my heart. There is an education to him through what he sees and meets with in me in consequence of his conduct to me, and there is an education to me also. I am conscious that I have conducted myself often towards different individuals in a way which appeared likely to deteriorate or injure their characters, and to turn them from God; and the thought would be intolerable if I did not really believe that God was watching over all, and that He permitted this in such a way as to make my bad or unwise conduct an important part of the education of those individuals. This does not and ought not to prevent self-condemnation, but it gives light with regard to consequences. I find an ocean of unfathomed comfort in that word, "He hath included them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy on all." Many things appear, and are, irretrievable to us, but there is nothing

irretrievable with God.[1] This is a great gospel to my heart. He who knows how to take occasion from the fall to bring in the redemption, may be safely trusted with each event, and with every action, good or bad. I believe that love reigns, and that love will prevail. I believe that He says to me every morning, "Begin again thy journey and thy life;" thy sins, which are many, are not only forgiven, but they shall be made by the wisdom of God the basis on which He will build blessings." Beloved friend, lift up your head, and hear Him who says, "All power is committed unto me in heaven and earth;" therefore let us not fear, but rest assured that for all these things we shall yet magnify His great and glorious name. It becomes us to go mourning, but let us mourn in an assured hope that He will overcome evil with good.

[1] A favourite and oft-repeated saying.

CHAPTER XIII.

Letters from 1847 till 1852.

THOSE autumn receptions at Linlathen which began in 1847 were continued almost uninterruptedly for the next twenty years. They owed much to the delicate tact and graceful courtesy of Mrs. Stirling. Speaking of her after her death in 1866, Professor Jowett, a frequent guest at Linlathen, says :—"I have always felt that Mrs. Stirling had a great hold on all who knew her. Besides her goodness and excellent sense, she had a quick perception of character, and a sort of quiet amusement in things that struck her, which made her conversation very pleasant." However varied were the elements around, she had the happy art of blending them into harmony. Her brother's gentle geniality and loving sense of the ludicrous rendered her task the easier. Mr. M'Leod Campbell, in August 1847, having written to Mr. Erskine to ask whether it would be convenient to receive his brother and son at Linlathen, got the following prompt reply :—

142. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LINLATHEN, 11*th August* 1847.

DONALD will be most welcome, for his own sake and for your sake. I like to keep up my acquaintance with the succeeding generation.

Mr. Maurice will be no hindrance, I hope, to the coming

of your brother and Major Dalzell. I have given up the idea of sorting people—

> Mingle, mingle, mingle,
> Mingle as they may.

I leave it to the master of the music to arrange them.

T. ERSKINE.

143. TO MADAME FOREL.

May 18, 1847.

DEAR FRIEND,—I have heard of Vinet's death, and desire to know the circumstances of it, and I apply to you as one able and willing to give the information, and also to tell me how poor Mme. Vinet is. It seems strange to me to think that he is no longer in this world, whom I had regarded since I first knew him, as an instrument that God had fashioned and fitted for a great and much-needed work amongst those who spoke his language,—it seems strange, for he has left his work not half finished according to our apprehensions; but God knows His own way. The work is His, and He knows how it is to be accomplished. Vinet was indeed a remarkable man—remarkable for large-mindedness and humble-mindedness, rendering to God the glory of His gifts. He was a great gift himself from God to his country and to his age; for such men, such apostolical prophetic men, are indeed God's most precious gifts. His chief gift was the man-God Jesus Christ, and His gifts next in value are men filled with the spirit of Jesus. What a consolation to all who knew his value, and especially to those who, like you, had the high privilege of being intimate with him, and experiencing the genuineness and tenderness of his friendship! I have always regarded his friendship as one of my most precious possessions, gratifying to my feelings and profitable to my soul, calling me from all low and worldly thoughts to the

pursuit of what was imperishable. Dear Madame Vinet, what a blow to her! May the Lord be her stay and her consolation! Indeed, where else is there help in any circumstances? But Vinet was in such a special manner the life, and pride, and head of his family, and friends also, that I cannot help thinking of them as sheep without a shepherd. . . .—Yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

144. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, *June* 21, 1847.

DEAR MADAME,—I regret having been so tardy in getting any information for you with regard to the translating and publishing of M. Vinet's works in this country. . . . I was much touched by dear Mme. Vinet's letter; there can be but few losses like hers, because there are so few men like him in the world. Such a combination of mental power and Christian character is the rarest of all things. I look round me in vain for anything like it. . . .—Yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

145. TO MRS. MACNABB.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, *Dec.* 11, 1847.

DEAR MRS. MACNABB,—You may know that death has been doing his work within our circle lately. Miss Graham of Airth, my mother's eldest remaining sister, eighty-four years of age, died last week. A fine old specimen of natural character and life, and one whom I remember from the earliest dawn, a vigorous clear-eyed woman, capable of being a martyr for any good cause, full of affection moreover, and full of old traditions and memories, which are now to be forgotten by all men. . . . With affectionate regards to Mr. Macnabb, I remain, yours most lovingly,

T. ERSKINE.

146. TO MADAME FOREL.

LINLATHEN, *25th April* 1848.

DEAR MADAME,—When I write to you or to any Christian friend at present, I am led to realise strongly that in the midst of all the confusion and tumult which cover the face of Europe there is still a sphere of peace and safety, inaccessible to any violence, in which those who trust in God may dwell securely, and delight to remember that all things must work together for good to those who love God; and even more than this, that all things are so overruled, that finally the earth, now so full of sin and misery, shall be full of the knowledge and glory of God, as the waters cover the sea. The hope of the final restoration, even of those who are now wandering farthest from God, is to me a most precious hope. It is a hope also in perfect harmony with the great principle that we must eat of the fruit of our own doings, for I believe that no mortal being can ever rise out of misery except by rising out of sin, and that none can rise out of sin except by partaking in Christ's death; that is, by accepting the due punishment, and by ceasing from their own will, and living in the divine will.

I cannot look on France without many anticipations of evil, of the recurrence perhaps of the atrocities of the old Revolution; for in case of a collision between the moderate and the communists and ultras, and even the temporary victory of the latter, dark deeds would inevitably be done; and you see how contagious the spirit is—the spirit of selfishness and insubordination. I remember, in the year 1838, dear M. Vinet told me that there would probably soon be political movements in the Canton de Vaud. I said, "Where every man is an elector, and every man is eligible to any office in the state, what ground can there be for a political movement?" He answered, "It is not

enough for them to be eligible, they wish, every one, to be elected." . . . —Yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

147. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, 1*st June* 1848.

MY DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—I have read your articles with the wish that you had some steady organ through which you might converse with the people of these countries periodically. I am sure it would be most healthful for many, and they would receive from you what they would refuse from any other. . . . Is it not altogether a most wretched delusion to suppose that a half or quarter civilised people should be legislated for and treated as if they were civilised? England is to be blamed doubtless for selfishness in her dealings towards them in time past, but not for the assumption of authority, which is just what they need, were it only wise. After all, I have an apprehension that there is something in their blood, which will make self-government in Ireland as hopeless as in Hayti. Mr. Combe, the phrenologist, was here yesterday; he spoke of the Irish as being generally characterised in their physical organisation by a want of conscientiousness, of discernment of consequences, and of caution, and by the presence of a redundant combativeness and destructiveness, to a degree that made him conceive that it would require many generations under the best moral training to fit them for what is called free government. I think there is much truth in Mr. Combe's deliverance. What do you think of this curious heroico-pathetic scene at the conviction of John Mitchell —for madness, I should say, still more than for felony? We must look to God for a fit man to take up all these loops; a strong-hearted and strong-headed man. I felt the kindness of sending me these papers very much. All good attend you and Mrs. Carlyle.—Yours ever truly, T. E.

148. TO MR. G. GALLOWAY.[1]

LINLATHEN, *June* 1848.

DEAR FRIEND,—I am much gratified by your writing to me at this strange time. The thoughts of any earnest intelligent man could never be without interest to me at any time, but now when there is a universal shaking of all old recognised foundations, I feel especial interest in listening to any utterance in reference either to the causes or the remedies of these movements that seems to proceed from a true feeling or a true insight. It is quite manifest that the reign of wisdom and righteousness is the only perfect government, and that a government is good or bad exactly as it approaches or recedes from that ideal; in the same way as the inward government of a man's own heart is good or bad according as wisdom and righteousness rule within him or not; and freedom and good government mean the same thing. A man is free in his own spirit when that which ought to be uppermost in him is uppermost, and that is subject which ought to be subject, and such a freeman will desire to see the same freedom in the government of nations; but he will not dream of creating it by giving political power to those who are the slaves of pride, selfishness, passion, and appetite. Freedom is a moral state, and cannot be produced by mechanical contrivances. Like you, I cannot separate between religion and politics.

I believe that society and all its combinations is intended by God to form a school for the education of the individual in likemindedness to Jesus Christ, and that no law is rightly framed which does not originate in this purpose; and thus I regret all social and political revolutions as

[1] A mason or housebuilder in Glasgow. "It was this George Galloway of whom Scott said, after being with me to see him, that he was one of the nobles of nature."—*Memorials of Dr. M'Leod Campbell*, vol. i. p. 275.

most speaking advertisements to men and to nations that they have not yet found the right principle of combination.

The communists have a distorted idea of the true thing; they see that there ought to be a common interest, but they wish to have the works of love without the principle of love. Poor fellows, I don't wonder at their zeal; oh that they saw the meaning of their own inarticulate cry! and that other political sects, radicals, chartists, etc., would but consider what self-government really consists in, and would set about having it and practising it in good earnest, and that they would learn to see and acknowledge the hand of God in the formation and ordering of society, for thus they would without a feeling of degradation give reverence to authorities and institutions; but this, through blindness to God—practical atheism—they have lost, and in it they have lost the only principle of union which can stand; for true brotherly love supposes the acknowledgment of a common Father. Spiritual order is the mark toward which we should be continually aiming, within and without. This is liberty, and this only—the liberty wherewith Christ maketh free. Peace be with you.—Yours truly,

T. ERSKINE.

149. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

LINLATHEN, *June* 29, 1848.

. . . THE technical conventionalities of our Scotch preaching seem to me to stifle all the religious life and sentiment of the country. People are partisans for election and reprobation—for Free Church or Established Church—and zealous partisans too: but I see little of yielding up the will to be a sympathising recipient of the Divine will, and I hear little preaching which makes that its object. My feeling on this matter reconciled me somewhat to the youth

of Mr. Robertson; he is not hackneyed in that routine. I have made it a point of honour not to seek for a man who might symbolise with myself, in what might be called idiosyncrasies of mine. I have sought a man of earnest truth and ability. I hope this man is such, but he is untried.—Ever yours, T. ERSKINE.

150. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, *July* 2, 1848.

MY DEAR RUTHERFURD,—I have just returned from church, where I heard Mr. Robertson preach. He is a very remarkable man. I should not wonder at his being soon regarded as the first man in the Church of Scotland. He is quite original, and has that knowledge of the use and meaning of words which indicates and arises from the finest kind of intelligence. He looks above thirty, and is at once self-possessed and unpresumptuous. I think him a rare man, and should grieve exceedingly at losing him. I shall send you testimonials as soon as I can get them—four or five good ones. . . .

My dear R., I am in Edinburgh for a few days, for this week at 8 Charlotte Square. What hours are you free? I hope to see something of you; to look backwards and forwards with you. I have been seeing poor Mackenzie. How many wrecks float around us, marking the track we have travelled by!—Yours ever, T. ERSKINE.

151. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, *July* 14, 1848.

MY DEAR RUTHERFURD,—I am very thankful for this,[1]

[1] The appointment as minister of the parish of Mains and Strathmartin, of the Mr. Robertson spoken of in the preceding letter. Dr. Cannan, the former minister, having resigned the charge, a committee was appointed to look out for a successor. Mr. Erskine, who as a principal heritor of Mains was a member of the committee, having had his attention directed to a young preacher recently licensed, suggested that he should be invited

and I hope that those who have had the doing of it may receive God's blessing for it. I thank you for what was done for me, but I thank you much more for what was done for Right; and this last, I believe, really covers the whole, for your listening to me was simply the consequence of your conviction that I desired what was right, and in some measure could judge of it. I never expected any personal answer from Sir George Grey; in his circumstances it would be indeed unreasonable to expect it. I feel for him, and often pray for light and strength to him, as to one who needs them much. There surely is light and strength somewhere in an ocean-fountain; the scanty rills of them which we find in ourselves seem to indicate an infinite source from whence they come; and it is pleasant to find that source a personal Being—a Father—a Friend in whom we may trust, to whom we may pour out our hearts. You will come to this some day, my dear friend, and you will bless Him who has led you to Himself by whatever means. I, though most worthy of being neglected by Him, as I have so much neglected Him, have yet found Him a real helper and a real refuge.

I shall count on seeing you in autumn. You cannot think what a friendship your Irish friends have struck up

to preach in the neighbouring church of Liff. The other members of the committee who heard Mr. Robertson on that occasion being equally satisfied, Mr. Erskine undertook to bring his name before the Government, with whom the appointment lay. In this, owing to Mr. Rutherfurd's influence with Sir George Grey, he succeeded. After a ten years' ministry in Mains and Strathmartin, Mr. Robertson was in 1858 translated to be minister of the Cathedral Church of Glasgow. Here his health broke down, and he died in January 1865, not having completed the forty-first year of his age. His "Pastoral Counsels" and "Sermons and Expositions" abundantly verify the high estimate which Mr. Erskine had so early formed. The Dean of Westminster, in his "Essays on Church and State" (p. 254), speaks of the "Pastoral Addresses" as "an excellent volume, which, if the style had been equal to the matter, would have entitled their author to a high place amongst the theological writers of the age."

with some of my people; and they have so deep an affection for Mrs. Rutherfurd, that I should expect some sympathy on the geometrical axiom—those that are equal to the same thing must be equal to one another.—Ever affectionately yours, T. E.

152. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, 1*st May* [1849].

DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—I am ashamed of having been so long of acknowledging the many proofs of your kindly remembrance which have reached me in the shape of *Examiners* and *Spectators* from time to time. Many thanks for them. I have read your articles with much interest and sympathy, and I wish you God-speed in your endeavours to stimulate and help our rulers in the great Irish difficulty. O for a man! That is what is wanted, and it appears to be wanted all over Europe—Democrats and Legitimists—all wanting a man. May God send him soon! Besides Ireland, what think you of our West Indian colonies for a change?—exhibiting the results of perhaps the most insane legislation of which the world has seen an example—down with slavery, up with slave sugar! What think you of Rush and Hudson? Are they not ominous signs of the times—like the Duc de Praslin and Teste, the forerunners of the French overturn? I have not had a letter from you since that great earthquake, which has shaken all the nations, and is still shaking them. It has been a sort of stethoscopising, trying whether the vital organs were in a sound state; the discoveries made have certainly been rather unpleasant. I fear for our own lungs, although we have survived hitherto, but the increasing mass of idle, reckless, ragged blackguardism that shows itself on all our roads is a fearful symptom. In short, the disease is alarm-

ing, and the doctors do not appear to know what to do. Beloved fellow-men, what is to come out of it? There is One who said with power, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." No other Healer will do for us. Is not that true, good sir?

Notwithstanding all these things (which, after all, we shall leave behind us in the course of a very few years), how have you and Mrs. Carlyle passed this winter and spring? Have you been solacing yourselves in the country, or satisfying yourself with Hyde Park and your back garden? I often, in thought, walk down Cheyne Row and look in upon you. Our weather is just beginning to relent, and the buds and leaves are coming forth as if there were no sin in the world. . . .—Yours, with much love,

T. ERSKINE.

Your friend Mazzini seems to have made a mess of it in Italy. He will be hanged yet some day, honest man! Let me have a line from you giving a good account of yourself and friends.

153. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, 22*d August* 1849.

MY DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—If you are indeed limited in your choice of days by this present week, I beseech you to come instanter on the receipt of this notification, Mrs. Carlyle and you, there being all needful accommodation; but if you could borrow a few days from next week, we would say Monday, not at all for our own convenience, but that I might make more sure of a friend of mine whom I had by anticipation invited to meet you whenever you might come, namely, James Mackenzie, a most genial man, who, you may remember, desired me to call your attention to some doings of

Oliver in the upper ward of Lanarkshire, as recorded in one of the Bannatyne books. Mrs. Carlyle wrote that you were in Ireland under the conduct of one of the insurgents, and I am anxious to have your report, whether you saw any glimpse of hope for that poor country. I am glad to hear that Mrs. C. herself has been gathering health and strength in Scotland—a little more strength to meet a little more exhaustion. Is not that the way of it until it is all over? You have still a mother to meet and part with. It is a wonderful manifestation. I had by this very day's post a letter from a friend enclosing a note from his mother, just that I might see under what an outpouring of affection he lived and moved in this world. And have we not all a real parent, though invisible, who is father and mother in one? not confined either to Haddington or Ecclefechan. I hope you may long possess yours, as I grieve for Mrs. Carlyle's loss of hers, she seemed to need her so much.

Well, we shall expect you every day from this Wednesday forward, until we see you or hear from you, . . . and with real love from all of us to you and your good lady, I remain yours faithfully, T. ERSKINE.

After nearly three years' constant residence at Linlathen, the winter, spring, and summer months of 1849-50 were passed in Paris. Writing to Mrs. Burnett on the 10th January 1850, Mrs. Stirling says—

"The cold here is extreme. To-day I can scarcely hold my pen. The streets are black with frost, but whenever the sun does get out, we see it, and feel its cheering influence. Mercifully my sister has kept free of cough, but she looks very delicate. My brother's appearance is much improved, and I think his general health is also improved. . . . We have enough of visitors, but not too many. We see dear Mme. de Staël, Adolphe Monod,

and some other French friends, and we see Lady Trotter and her daughter, Lady Elgin and her daughter, and some others. We see Plymouth Brethren, Irvingites, Roman Catholics, Puseyites, and Evangelicals. We see much to admire and love in all, and much to weep over also. Madame de Staël and Adolphe Monod are quite evidently seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and are deeply solemnised by the aspect of the times."

The only letter of this period from Mr. Erskine that has been preserved is the following:—

154. TO M. CRAMER MALLET.

ST. GERMAIN-EN-LAYE, 25 *Juin* 1850.

CHER AMI,—Si nous avions la faculté de nous transporter par la volonté seule, nous nous trouverions bientôt auprès de vous; mais dans ce beau temps, quand la nature et même nos sensations nous poussent vers un pays où les lacs et les montagnes offrent perpétuellement l'espoir de la fraîcheur, la difficulté de voyager s'augmente beaucoup, surtout pour les personnes âgées et dont les forces s'épuisent par la chaleur. Je voudrois bien encore voir votre intérieur de famille, changé, comme il doit être, par le développement du caractère de vos filles, et par le progrès des autres membres de la famille. Nous devons tous avancer dans le bon chemin. Le tems s'avance, et l'importante œuvre de la vie doit aussi s'avancer. Nous avons passé plus que six mois au milieu de cette capitale de la civilisation Européenne, une civilisation qui ne reconnaît pas Dieu, et paraît ne pas être reconnue par lui. Il y a un caractère de superficialité empreint sur toutes les manifestations de cette nation gaie et légère, qui la distingue de la nôtre, qui même dans son impiété paraît sérieuse. J'espère que le besoin de Dieu, et d'une communication avec lui, se fera

senti dans toutes les nations à présent. Le besoin de quelque chose est senti, mais l'interprète qui peut expliquer les cris de la nature ne se trouve pas. Que Dieu envoie de vrais apôtres.

Je suis bien aise d'entendre vos bonnes nouvelles du caractère de votre gendre. Où demeurent-ils? Il nous ferait grand plaisir de vous voir chez nous cette été; nous espérons y être après le milieu du mois de Juillet. Amenez Clémentine, et en passant par Paris, arrangez qu'elle voie la maison des Diaconesses sous la direction de M. le Pasteur Vermeil. Nous pourrions facilement recevoir toute la famille.

J'ai vu un peu M. Adolphe Monod, un homme aimable et estimable, et admirable par ses talents. La position de l'Eglise me paraît extrêmement mauvaise ici comme chez vous. Chaque Pasteur doit avoir son propre troupeau, alors les relations du Pasteur et troupeau pourroient exister. À présent elles n'existent pas, qui est un mal énorme. Je crois que M. Monod avait raison, quand il décidait rester dans l'église établie, et pourtant les difficultés que rencontre un pasteur fidèle dans les circonstances actuelles sont bien affreuses. . . .

T. ERSKINE.

155. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

LINLATHEN, 29*th March* 1851.

MY DEAR DEAR RUTHERFURD,— . . . Of course I am interested in hearing how you get on with Gorgias, and how you like it. It is an argument against which Voltaire might have successfully written another Candide, and yet Leibnitz's principle in the Théodicée, with reasonable modifications, and Plato's in the Gorgias, will, I am persuaded, form a part of the creed of the most thinking and most conscientious part of mankind. Both Socrates and Voltaire laughed, but what different laughs! Voltaire thought of

nothing but of pulling down what was wrong, and he did so much really good and useful work in this way, that he did not feel the necessity of building up. He was satisfied with negation; that is to say, negation with him was so active an employment that he did not come to feel that in itself it is a vacuum, and can satisfy no one. There is something irresistibly comical in the levity with which he treats the gravest principles—it is like a child pulling off an old man's wig; whereas dear Socrates has such a deep and true veneration for everything that is really right in principle, he feels that without it man and the universe are nothing more than a dust storm.

156. TO MRS. BURNETT.

44 LOWNDES ST., 18*th Feb.* 1852.

MY DEAR COUSIN,— . . . There is something marvellous in the difference of the lots appointed to different persons. We somehow or other know more people here than we know in Edinburgh, so that we have a constant succession of visitors of all varieties, to the great wear and tear both of mind and body, and yet with a great interest. The duty of bearing one another's burdens is a wholesome exercise to the spirit in such circumstances, preserving from dissipation and distraction in the midst of the tumult. Yesterday I met with a clergyman who read me a letter addressed by 360 Italian peasants to a deputy of their own, whom they had sent to London to inquire into the condition of the Church of England, and to see whether they could enter into brotherly relations with it. The letter was written in a wise and temperate spirit. These people were Lombards, chiefly from the Venetian territory. There is also, as you probably know, a great movement towards the Bible in Tuscany.

I had a call also yesterday from one of our Scotch bishops,

Mr. Ewing, Bishop of Argyll, from whom I have received occasional messages during past years. I liked him; he seemed to me of a good spirit, and not at all a slave to what is the external of his Church.

157. TO MRS. BURNETT.

LINLATHEN, 23*d August* 1852.

CHRISTIAN and I went into Edinburgh the other day to see our cousins in Manor Place. Cousin Rachel seems fast breaking up. Her memory and recollection are sometimes quite gone, so that she does not recognise those dearest to her. There is something most touching in her condition. When I was in town for the funeral of Mr. W. Erskine, I observed the beginning of this, and it seemed to me like a rebuke of all our sorrow for the death of friends. I never knew a more loving spirit than hers, and her expressions now are often just the overflowings of a heart filled with love to God and man. I cannot say what sympathy I have had from her at times when I needed it.[1]

158. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

LINLATHEN, 14*th Oct.* 1852.

MY BELOVED RUTHERFURD,—How are you? Is your heart finding any rest? I should be so thankful for a word from you, to let me know in what state you are. There was something fearfully stunning and overwhelming in the suddenness of the blow at last,[2] notwithstanding her long delicacy. My dear friend, I know no man who has had to pass through such varied trials as you; none to

[1] "And poor Cousin Rachel, she too is passing from the scene on which she has always looked with such a smile of kindliness and charity."—(Extract from a letter of the late Lord Elgin, dated Quebec, 23d October 1852.)

[2] The death of his wife.

whom the voice from above has come in such different languages, such sorrow, and such success; and if in your present circumstances I had room in my heart for any other prayer for you than that you might be supported and comforted, I would ask that that oft-repeated voice might not come to you in vain. Our spiritual nourishment here on this pilgrimage is broken body and shed blood, a will of God revealed in a blighted will of man. If you are unable to write yourself, your nephew will perhaps have the kindness to do it for you. I return him my thanks for his first letter.

I regret so much that I did not go down with you the day I saw you at Fullerton's, that I might have seen her face and heard her voice once again.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

My sisters join their sympathy with mine.

159. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, 30*th Oct.* 1852.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—How is your heart—your burdened and broken heart? Who is living with you, and how are you occupying yourself? I ask this not with the wish that you could find something to withdraw you from your sorrow, but rather hoping that you may be learning its true use. We are placed amongst dying things that we may be forced to take hold of the undying, and to discover that this "undying" is a person with whom it is possible to have fellowship, and from whom we may derive help and consolation, which is certainly our highest learning. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest," is the utterance which He addresses to us in all the variety of our circumstances; not calling us from other things, but teaching us to find Him in them all. I shall

hope to see you. The burying-ground where the funeral[1] is to be is divided from your own by Jeffrey's.—Ever yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

160. TO MRS. BURNETT.

6th Nov. 1852.

BELOVED cousin Rachel is now released from that bondage under which the flesh lays us. Her clear, sweet spirit had been clouded for the last four months, but still under that mist a blessed inward life from time to time manifested itself. Cousin Manie is wonderfully supported in her loneliness as far as it has gone yet; she is the last, not of her family, but of her generation. . . . Lift up your head, dear friend.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

[1] The funeral of Thomas Thomson, Esq., an intimate friend of Lord Rutherfurd.

CHAPTER XIV.

Letters from 1853 till 1856.

161. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

LINLATHEN, 13*th Oct.* 1853.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—This is my birthday. I am this day sixty-five years of age. I cannot express to you with what a weight of guilt the sense of unprofitableness lies upon me. You are now one of my oldest friends, and no one has ever stood to me in the same place that you have. What a mysterious thing the history of a man's being—visible and invisible—is! Don't you feel it so when you look back on your own? Dear friend, God's blessing be with you.—Yours ever affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

Is it not interesting to consider and look back on the different compartments into which life has been divided? Certain persons and certain thoughts have predominated in each of these compartments; we pass from one to another; from one set of persons and thoughts to another; many of those who have been most important to us have disappeared from the outward picture of our life, but yet retain their place, or even take a larger, in the inner. The picture changes, and we—have we changed? and if we have changed, is it progress, real spiritual progress?

162. TO LORD RUTHERFURD.

LINLATHEN, *8th Nov.* 1853.

DEAR RUTHERFURD,— . . . Have you observed in the papers that the Council of King's College have deposed Maurice on account of heretical doctrines, taught in that volume which I gave you? I understand that the point is, the denial of the unending duration of the future punishment. I congratulate him on being a martyr in such a cause; but I should be sorry if at this day the Church of England, as a body, confirms such a sentence. If spiritual perfection consists (as they would all admit it does) in the love of God, and of men, and of all righteousness, it is not easy to see how such a doctrine as the eternity of punishment can lead to it. Men cannot be frightened into love; and they cannot easily realise God as a God of love, if such a doctrine be believed.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

163. TO MRS. BURNETT.

LINLATHEN, *9th Nov.* 1853.

. . . I HAD gone to town partly to see Beveridge. . . . Besides, I wished also to hear the introductory lecture in the Philosophical Institution by my friend Mr. Scott.[1] I heard it, and liked it very much. He dwelt chiefly on the distinction between information and education, and on the greater desire for the former than for the latter manifested by our population at present. They did not desire a knowledge of principles so much as of the results of principles, which they might turn to immediate account. They did not want any deep improvement within their own mind, but a kind of knowledge which would enable them to make money. Next lecture-evening I heard Ruskin, whom

I also liked in his measure. You may have observed in the newspapers that my friend Maurice has been deposed from his professorship in King's College, on account of heretical opinions. The non-eternity of future punishment is, I believe, the point. You know how completely I sympathise with him in this. I hope the Church of England will not treat him as the Church of Scotland treated Campbell.

164. TO MRS. SCHWABE.[1]

LINLATHEN, 12*th Dec.* 1853.

DEAR FRIEND,— . . . The spirit of Mr. Tayler's[2] discourse is very sweet. I feel that he has a brother's heart, and that I can sympathise much with him in the idea he gives of the meaning and purpose of human life. What I desire further for him is that he should feel and teach that there is a sorrow in the heart of God over the resisting of His purpose on the part of man, and that this loving sorrow is manifested in Christ, the man of sorrows, bearing all the burdens of His brethren, the Word, who in the beginning was with God, and was God. I must refer you to your recollections of our conversations at Glyn Garth, when we talked of the necessity under which we found ourselves, when attempting to realise the existence previous to all creation, to conceive of Him as having within the compass of His own being the capacity of both giving and receiving love, and the power of gratifying that capacity; an absolute solitariness is incompatible with the idea, or rather feeling, of self-completeness. This necessity helps us to entertain the idea of the primal relations of Father and Son being contained in the Godhead, and we are glad to receive and

[1] A German lady resident near Manchester, a person overflowing with benevolence.

[2] John James Tayler, Principal of Manchester New College.

acknowledge the sentiment connected with this relationship as the source of all creation. The upper hemisphere of the circle of Deity gives us the spirit of Father, Giver, Master; the lower that of Son, Receiver, Servant. There must be a divine in all moral truth; obedience is as divine as command, both proceeding from love and duty. This, you may say, is a human thought about God, but I cannot think of God otherwise than as an infinitely good man, all-wise and all-powerful. All good desires in man, therefore, I conceive to have their deep root in God, and thus I am forced on the idea of something like a duality in God's unity, to escape from the terrible thought of an eternal solitude before creation, and from the idea that God was driven to create in order to have an object of love.

We see at once the beauty of the idea that the moral creation is to be formed in the image of the Son, thus binding the creature and the Creator together, but not according to the Pantheistic idea, for the moral creature has a free-will which, with reverence let it be said, omnipotence cannot compel, but which all-wise love may train and educate. In the misuse of this free-will man turned from the worship of God to the worship of self, but still, as he was created in the divine image of the divine Son, and had his standing in the Son, the spirit of the Son within the depths of His being protested against his sin, and suffered for him, the just for the unjust, that He might bring him back to God. This is, I believe, that great work of redemption which is set forth in the history of Jesus Christ.

If you could suppose the spirit of a loving man like St. John imprisoned in the breast of a violent murderer like Barabbas, you could not doubt but that he would feel himself agonised and jarred every moment by the contact of the selfish cruelty with which he was environed. And yet

his suffering would not arise simply or chiefly from the discrepancy between himself and Barabbas, but because he would feel that Barabbas was still his fellow-creature, his brother, and he would not be able to endure the thought that his brother should be under the influence of this fearful spiritual malady. In fine, it would not be disapprobation merely, but love that would produce his suffering. And thus, though free leave were given to him to go out from that prison-house, he would say: 'I cannot go, I must remain till I bring back this poor brother out of hatred into love, out of self into God.' And thus would he continue in him, suffering for him, the just for the unjust, that he might bring him back to God. And when Barabbas melted under this suffering love, when he also began to suffer in the thought of having outraged duty and outraged love, when he became partaker of John's sufferings, he would be brought back to God. What I have supposed John to do in the case of Barabbas, I believe in truth and in fact to be done by Jesus Christ in the case of every human being. I believe that He is in every man, and that it is His suffering voice which speaks in the conscience of every man. I believe that He is thus suffering for every man, the just for the unjust, that He may bring us back to God. I believe thus that the recorded history of our Lord in the Gospels is the outward and objective manifestation of a great subjective truth which is going on, and which will go on until every soul of man is brought back to God. And I am sure that the sorrow which holy love feels for sin is the true essential and divine medicine for sin. I believe that the knowledge of the distinction between right and wrong is a most precious gift; and yet I believe that it cannot alone accomplish the task of turning man's heart from self to God. We need to know that the voice which in conscience speaks to us of right and wrong is the voice

of a love which suffers when we do wrong, and must continue to suffer until we return from self to God.

Dear friend, this is a very confused statement, but I am confident that the roots of great truths are contained in it. Our former talks, if remembered by you, will throw a light on it.

You say that you know I have felt sympathy with Unitarians.[1] The truth is, I have thought that they have not been rightly met. They have been confronted with texts and traditions, instead of being met with reason and truth and love. This is my sympathy with them, for I think them wrong.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

165. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

38 CHARLOTTE SQ., EDINR., 22*d March* 1854.

DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—The welcome which I gave to your kind letter and its accompaniments would have been more truly expressed by a speedier answer. But my time has been occupied by various forms of nothing since I have been in Edinburgh, so that I have been hindered from doing the things which I most wished. . . . My sister, Mrs. S., was much flattered by your remembrance and gift, and would have written herself if she had supposed it possible that I could have allowed your packet to remain so long unacknowledged, but she was at Linlathen and I in Edinburgh, and I did not tell her of my non-doings. During my absence here the house of Linlathen was entered by thieves who contrived to take away very little, but left behind an unpleasant feeling of insecurity.

Drummond's pamphlet is a strange production. The general condition of dislocation in society seems to me rather true; but the remedy, that of entering his church, does not meet the necessities of the case. I believe that

[1] Mrs. Schwabe was a Unitarian.

nothing short of a right perception of the relation of God to man, and of man to God, will do the desired work; but as to the living machinery which may teach or infuse this perception the difficulty remains. Your friend, Lord George Hill,[1] has done something, it appears, and gives occasion to desire the multiplication of Lord Georges. He and Lord Ashburton both act on Nelson's signal, "England expects every man to do his duty," and for my poor part I give them my best thanks and best wishes, hoping for still higher and better things. We had a visit from your friend Kingsley,[2] and I heard his lectures on Alexandria, in company with dear old James Mackenzie. . . . Poor fellow, he has lost his two sisters . . . which makes him very lonely; but he has a fine sociable loving spirit, not easily to be quenched. Give your dear wife my affectionate regards, and believe me to be lovingly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

166. TO CHEVALIER BUNSEN.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 8*th August* 1854.

MY DEAR CHEVALIER,—Your farewell lines from St. Katherine's Dock were very gratifying to me, written as they were from under such a pressure of thoughts as must have been lying upon you at that time. I now congratulate you on your escape, not from work, for I can never regard true genuine work in a great cause to be other than a privilege and an honour, but from the perplexity of being called to do work in one way which you thought ought to

[1] Referring to Lord George's improvements in an estate in the county of Donegal. See "Facts from Gweedore," by Lord George Hill; 1845.

[2] Charles Kingsley says, "Mr. Erskine of Linlathen is a charming old man." During his visit to Linlathen he writes, "This place is very pleasant, and Mr. Erskine delightful. He gave us a long exposition last night about the indwelling Word, and I am delighted to find that our views seem to agree thoroughly."—*Life of Charles Kingsley*, vol. i. p. 418.

be done in another. And though I can never congratulate any man on leaving England, yet I can congratulate you on being set down at Heidelberg, and on the banks of that beautiful stream. The Neckar I have always considered the sweetest feature in Germany. I wish you much peace there and domestic enjoyment, and much inspiration in true philosophy and true history, to give value to that leisure which is given you. I have known you now for nearly thirty years, and I have always found my intercourse with you to be a stimulant for good to me, because I have always found you living under a vocation to use the faculties God has bestowed on you, for the advancement of light and truth in the world. I am sure that you will do so in your present circumstances, and that many will profit by your retirement.

I hope your ladies are all well,—Madame Bunsen and her daughter, Miss Amelia, and the rest. The love of God is everywhere, and so the possibility of peace and spiritual progress is everywhere also. May this possibility have its full realisation in your house! Farewell.—Ever truly yours, T. ERSKINE.

167. TO MR. MAURICE.

7 FORRES STREET, EDINBURGH, 3*d Nov.* 1854.

MY DEAR AND MUCH-HONOURED FRIEND,—I cannot easily express to you the depth of sympathy with which I have been reading your book which you sent me.[1] I have read the dedicatory letter and the first five sermons. In the letter, the expression of your feeling is sometimes harrowing; it seems written in your heart's blood. I was at first almost surprised that you could feel so unspiritual and, I might even say, so unintelligent a criticism so deeply; but

[1] *The Doctrine of Sacrifice.*

I soon perceived that your agony was a righteous agony, which it would be good for me and others to enter into. "If ye die with Him, ye shall live with Him; if ye suffer with Him, ye shall reign with Him." Beloved friend, you are witnessing a good confession for the God of truth; and I am thankful to say, that I feel more and more, in your tone and manner of expressing yourself, the outcoming of a great conviction, which uses your faculties for its own purpose.

Were I capable of it, I should rejoice to give my countrymen the true idea of your method of teaching, as well as of the teaching itself; feeling, as I do, that they are so much occupied and possessed by another far inferior method, that they turn away from that higher and purer kind, as if it were unintelligible; but I am not fit for the task. I wished often, during the course of the summer, to have tried to have persuaded you to spend some quiet time with us; but we thought that any place which was not your own home, or any people which were not your own people, might be a burden to you. Farewell.—Ever truly yours, T. ERSKINE.

I shall be in Edinburgh when you are down, and I would look out for a resting-place for you, if you would allow me.

168. TO THE SAME.

7 FORRES STREET, 20*th Nov.* [1854].

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have just read the 13th sermon of the "Doctrine of Sacrifice." As I finished those that preceded it, I often had the thought of writing to you and expressing the deep sympathy which I felt, and my conviction that this was indeed the unveiling of our Father's heart. But after reading "Christ's Sacrifice a Peace-offering for Mankind," I cannot help writing to say how thankful I feel to God that such words are spoken to our generation,

and that they are words of truth and soberness, though they cast into deep shade all that man, if left to the mere inspiration of his own desires, could ever have imagined.

If the rash censures which have been passed upon your Essays have led to this production, good has certainly come out of evil; and if your censurer himself reads these discourses, I cannot but think that his heart must smite him for what he has said.

The paragraph beginning on the 211th page, and ending in the next, is inexpressibly precious. I hope to speak to you of some of these things at leisure, or rather to hear you; and to this end, I hope you will allow me, as I proposed to you before, to be your host whilst you are in Edinburgh. . . .—Yours ever truly, T. ERSKINE.

169. TO MRS. PATERSON.

21 WESTBOURNE STREET, LONDON, 14*th Feb.* [1855].

MY DEAR DAVIE,—. . . I may as well give you a sketch of yesterday's proceedings. Before breakfast was well away, Mrs. Schwabe made her energetic and loving appearance. She sat with us a good while. . . . Mr. Maurice then came in, and I almost immediately stated to him the difficulties and obscurities which had been felt by many readers of his works, even by those who admired them and loved their spirit. I told him, that people could not make out whether, according to him, the sacrifice of Christ had made any change on the general condition of humanity, or whether it was only a manifestation of God's character in relation to man. I pressed on him that he might make this more distinct, and ought to do it. When he went away, we went out, and called on the Bishop of Natal, who is a handsome, young, intelligent, frank-looking man; he spoke pleasantly about his mission. . . .—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE

170. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LONDON, *April* 1855.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—. . . I have seen a good deal of Maurice. I hear him every Sunday with great interest. He fully apprehends that what has given to earnest Calvinistic preaching its great power is, that it sets forth God and not man, as Arminianism has done.[1] I have seen Kingsley too, and Bishop Ewing, and a Mr. Baldwin Brown, a friend of Scott's, an Independent minister. I also see Carlyle, whom I really love, there is so much geniality of heart about him. My sister Mrs. Stirling is struggling against cold and London oppression, sooty atmosphere, visiting, etc.—Yours ever affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

171. TO THE REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.[2]

5 DUKE STREET, PORTLAND PLACE,
LONDON, 12*th April* 1855.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I wish you would get from that goddaughter of the old lexicographer some documents authenticating her relationship as goddaughter to him. Do you think that, in the parish register of her baptism, any record of the fact could be found? For, if the history could be fairly made out, there can be little doubt but that something could be done for her. I mentioned the matter to Carlyle, who immediately said that the Prime Minister would feel that the bestowment of a small pension, at least

[1] Speaking of Calvinism and Arminianism, Mr. Erskine said that the former was a sheep in wolf's clothing,—the latter a wolf in sheep's clothing.

[2] For thirty years minister of the Baptist Church at Boston, in England. He first met Mr. Erskine at Hamburg in 1822 (*ante*, p. 31). Looking back to their intercourse at that time, Mr. Mathews, fifty years afterwards, says, in a letter to Mr. Erskine, "I often feel my religion so fresh and green, and my preaching so young and joyous, that I am surprised, and, inwardly thanking God, cannot but remember that it is to you, as the instrument, I owe all my light and life."

to the extent of keeping her from want, would be recognised by the whole country as a right use of power. Now, do something speedily, my dear man. I heard Maurice on Sunday. His father was lying an unburied corpse, having died on Friday before. His text was the sixteenth Psalm, which he read over three times with excellent comment; first, as it must have been understood or felt by David or his contemporaries; second, as it might have been used by Christ Himself; thirdly, as it is to be understood by ourselves. It was one of the most striking sermons I have ever listened to. . . .—Ever yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

172. TO THE REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.

5 DUKE ST., PORTLAND PLACE, 11*th May* 1855.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Have I seemed negligent of you and your commission? But not so in fact, for I went down to Deptford with Carlyle and saw your ladies and their curious relics; and Carlyle met almost immediately after with the Bishop of Oxford, who is the almoner of some royal bounty, and put down their names (both of them, and to the survivor) for £10 annually, which is some addition to their small means. He has hope of something further, but that is only in prospect. Dear Sir Robert Inglis has been carried away from the waves of this troublous world to the rest which remaineth to the people of God. I have known and loved him long, and have received much love from him, and so the world is that much emptier for me. . . . Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

173. TO MR. MAURICE.

August 1855.

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . I was called on Friday last week to attend the funeral of F. Russell's wife; you re-

member him, I am sure. She was an amiable and most interesting person. . . . I met Dr. Hanna of the Free Church there, who told me that your friend Davis's brother in the Crimea was very ill—dangerously so. He told me also an interesting anecdote of poor Capt. Lyons, who had died at Therapia under the care of the Mackenzies. Just before his death, Mrs. Mackenzie carried something to him. He rallied a little and thanked her, and then said, "Good-bye," and, as if to comfort her, he added, "You must expect to lose some of your patients." Dear Russell's house is darkened. My sisters join me in best regards to you both.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

174. TO M. GAUSSEN.

LINLATHEN, 27*th Aug.* 1855.

MY DEAR GAUSSEN,—We have just received a letter from our cousin, Mrs. Bosanquet, in which she speaks of you and your mother, and your sister and Caroline, in terms which correspond so well with the impressions which remain in my own heart of you all, that I feel stirred up to write a word of brotherly love to you. My visits to Geneva, and my relations with many there whom I loved, and hope always to love, form one of the most pleasing remembrances of my life. I often pass them in review before my mind's eye, the dead and the living, and recall words and looks, which reveal the spirit, and which address and can only be understood by our spiritual organs.

The beautiful nature, the lake, the mountains, the sunrisings and settings, the mysteries of light, and colour, and distance, re-appear also like the visions of another world purified from all pollutions, declaring infinite love, and power, and holiness. I should like to pay another visit to that lovely land, and to converse with you, my friend, on the many wonderful things which our God has

shown us and taught us since we first met, above thirty years ago. For my own part I have much reason to be ashamed, but I have also much reason to bless the God of all patience. Dear Merle has lost his wife; he was my first Genevese friend, and I have never ceased to love him. Mr. Haldane had paid his visit to you a short time before that, and had been the means of stirring up a new life in some of the young men. The matter of his teaching was what ought to be the subject of all teaching, "the free grace of God;" but he surely did not sufficiently consider the fearful power in man to resist that grace, and so fell into the mistake of supposing that those only who manifested the effects of grace had been visited by grace, or were embraced within God's purpose of grace; and thus man's confidence was necessarily made to depend on something which he discovered within himself, instead of the purpose of God revealed in Jesus Christ for every man. I cannot write to you, my dear friend, without saying something of this great salvation, which God is working out against such opposition on the part of man. Give my love to Merle and my sympathy. Give my love to all the branches of the dear C— family and to all the Cramers, descendants of my loving hosts, M. and Mad. Cramer; to the descendants also of Mad. Necker de Saussure—the Turretins. Farewell, beloved friend. My affectionate regards to each member of your own family.—Ever truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

The following letter of M. Gaussen gives an affecting narrative of the death of his mother:—

TO MR. ERSKINE.

LES GROTTES, 17 *Sept.* 1855.

MON CHER ERSKINE,—Depuis hier je n'ai plus de mère ici-bas. Je me sens le besoin de vous le faire savoir, pour

que vous vous associez à ma douleur et à mes consolations. Vous y avez été vous même, vous aviez connu le prix de celle que j'ai perdue. Elle était encore Vendredi matin d'une admirable santé pour son grand âge, d'une amabilité d'esprit et d'une tendresse de cœur rarement données à de plus jeunes. Vendredi, à 8 heures du matin, mes cousines Puerari, ma sœur, ma fille, mes quatre domestiques et moi, nous montâmes dans sa chambre autour de son lit, pour la prière du matin, qui devait avoir un intérêt particulier, parceque c'était le jour anniversaire de sa 91^e^ année. Elle nous dit après la prière des mots tendres et charmants que je crois entendre encore. Nous descendîmes pour déjeuner; mais on vint bientôt appeler ma sœur de sa part (c'était 9½ heures). "Quand je te vois entrer dans ma chambre," lui dit-elle, "je suis la plus heureuse des mères." "Je t'aime pour ce que je vois en toi," ajouta-t-elle (à l'occasion d'un tendre reproche que lui faisait Sophie), "mais Dieu m'aime malgré ce qu'il voit en moi. Je désire me lever." Et sans attendre la réponse, elle sortit elle-même de son lit et s'assit sur un fauteuil pour s'habiller de ses propres mains, quand Sophie vit son visage s'altérer, courut à elle et s'agenouilla à ses côtés, nous faisant appeler. Ma mère n'était plus sur la terre! Nous fûmes quelque tems à ne le pas croire; car il n'y eut pas une plainte, pas un effort, pas un soupir; nous n'avons pas même pu dire le moment précis où son âme bienheureux s'envolait vers son Dieu. Il y a cinq semaines qu'ayant fait une chute qui n'eut aucune suite fâcheuse, elle crut être à son dernier jour et nous fit tous appeler pour nous donner sa bénédiction: "Rendez grâce avec moi," nous dit-elle, "j'avais toujours craint ce moment; mais Dieu me remplit l'âme d'une paix qui m'étonne moi-même." Merle, Demale, Bertholet et moi, nous priâmes tour à tour hier sur sa tombe; beaucoup d'amis et de frères chantaient autour de la fosse ce beau cantique: "Non, ce n'est pas

mourir que d'aller vers son Dieu. . . ." Je suis très affligé ; je sens un grand vide de n'avoir plus ce cœur de mère occupé de son fils sur la terre ; de ne plus retrouver à notre table cette bonne tendre et vénérée amie qui était l'ornement et la joie de ma maison, et qui portait des fruits de justice jusque dans la vieillesse toute blanche, arbre planté de Dieu dans les parvis de l'Éternel. Je demande au Seigneur qu'il m'instruise, m'humilie, et me rende plus aimant—par sa sainte parole et par ses dispensations.

Cher ami, voilà bien des détails. Pour un autre que vous ils seraient de trop. Mais j'ai cru les devoir à votre amitié. Je n'ai jamais oublié ce mot aimable que vous me dites, il y a 25 ans : "Gaussen, je connais votre mère, et vous n'avez pas connu la mienne." Ce mot demeure encore sur mon cœur. Je me sens une fraternité de plus avec ceux qui aiment et vénèrent une mère. Dieu vous bénisse et vous garde, mon cher Erskine ! Recevez les vœux sincères, sérieux et tendres, de mon amitié. Je ne veux pas controverser avec vous ; vous avez dix fois plus d'esprit que moi ; je dirai que vous en avez trop. Ne construisez pas Dieu, cher ami ; révérez-le tel que la Sainte Bible, divinement inspirée et faite pour les simples, l'a décrit. Ce Dieu nous a convertis des idoles de ce monde pour le servir comme un Dieu vivant et vrai, et pour attendre des cieux son fils Jésus qui nous a délivrés de la colère à venir. Certainement il y a un colère à venir, puisque Dieu le dit. Certainement il y a un Fils unique qui en délivre les croyants. Certainement celui qui a le Fils a la vie éternelle, mais celui qui ne croit pas au Fils, la colère de Dieu reste sur lui. O grâces à Dieu pour son don ineffable. Je vous ai gardé une vraie affection et une vraie estime ; j'ai aussi des souvenirs très reconnaissants de vous et de votre famille. Saluez, je vous prie, de ma part Monsieur et Madame Paterson, ainsi que Madame Stirling

(votre sœur) si elle se souvient de moi.—Votre affligé et affectionné, L. GAUSSEN.

P.S.—Vous auriez bien fait d'écrire quelques paroles de sympathie à Merle. J'ai eu beaucoup de plaisir à faire la connaissance des Bosanquet et de tous leurs garçons. J'aimais, en voyant Madame, à me rappeler sa bonne sœur. Le mari est un homme fait droit. J'avais connu son père, qui me disait de lui, il y a une quinzaine d'années : " J'ai en Lincolnshire un très bon fils, tendre et respectueux."

175. TO M. GAUSSEN.

LINLATHEN, 22*d Sept.* 1855.

DEAR GAUSSEN, BELOVED FRIEND,—So that long life is terminated, and you have no longer before your eyes that sweet symbol of the love of your Father in heaven. She is no longer with you, but I believe, as you do, that these human relationships have an eternal truth in them, springing from an eternal root, the eternal relations of the Father and the Son. He has formed us in His own image, and our human relationships are parts of that image, and therefore in their measure and degree may be expected to partake in the eternity of their root. Just before I received your letter, I had been reading at our family worship the 17th chapter of St. John, in which our Lord speaks such wonderful words about the union of man with God, "I in them, and Thou in me," "that they may be made perfect in one." Dear friend, I would suffer with you, and I would also rejoice with you for her sake, for her release from the bondage of mortality. I can accompany you in the long retrospect of life, in the whole of which she occupies such a place; so that her life was a constituent element of your life from infancy onwards. Dear woman—I see her before me, her genial, quiet, motherly face and character; her

look and voice of benevolence and wisdom and solidity. I know no higher attribution that can be given to man than that of unselfishness and dutifulness, recognising that the law of his being does not spring from himself, but comes to him from God. And this makes the distinction between the world's love and Christian love. Christian love is unselfish and dutiful, whilst the other with all its beauty is soiled by selfishness in one form or other. And thus we have our completeness in Christ. The Son comes from the bosom of the Father to be the ground and law of man's being, and to know Him as such, and the Father who sent Him, is eternal life. The eternal death consists in man's persisting in abiding in his own selfish will, and refusing that kingdom of heaven a place within him. I love you, dear Gaussen. The scenes at Satigny return to me like the scenes of my youth, as do other connections at Geneva. . . . You speak to me of dear Merle, and say that I ought to write to him. Since ever I heard of his sorrow, I have purposed to write to him, but my own unmarried condition made me feel as if I were less fitted to be a sympathiser with him than I can be in your sorrow. Since my first meeting with Merle I have never ceased to value and love him, and I know the exceeding tenderness of his affections. I have read the little *souvenir* with deep interest and thankfulness. . . . Madlle. Sophie and your daughter will feel this blank along with you, but you will find it abundantly supplied in Him who is the completeness of man.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

P.S.—I shall write to Merle in a day or two; in the meantime assure him of my brotherly love and sympathy Dear friend, on reading over this letter, I feel as if I had not given out the tithe of my love to you, or of my gratitude for your writing to me so soon.

176. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

LINLATHEN, *20th Oct.* 1855

MY DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—Every token of your remembrance is highly valued by me, and the pamphlet itself is not a little interesting and instructive. A man who would be helpful to men must be a brother, not a supercilious dealer out of doles to them. The mercy which expresses itself in the last way can bless neither him that gives nor him that takes. Mr. Waddell has certainly some administrative faculty, but then he was a dissenter, and an unauthorised unofficial philanthropist, and as such he had no right nor reason to expect anything but counteraction from official incapables. It is a comfort, however, to see that an administrative faculty even in such circumstances can accomplish something, and most gratifying it is to find what recognition it meets from those in whose behalf it is exercised. The complete triumph would be to enlist even the influential incapables themselves in the service by peaceful wisdom.

I hope you are now finding the good effects of your silent and solitary rides on your health both of body and mind. I take it for granted that you are now returned to London (although it is rather too soon to leave the leafy lanes, when they are just putting on their autumnal colours), and that you are again engaged with the old seven years' man. A painful wrestle with difficulties he had, and his biographer, I suppose, must have if he would through him give faithful instruction to living men. . . . Tell the lady that I feel it to be very long since I had a line from her. This with my best regards.—Yours ever most truly, with all good wishes, T. ERSKINE.

177. TO M. ADOLPHE MONOD.

21 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, EDINBURGH,
24th Dec. 1855.

BELOVED FRIEND AND BROTHER IN CHRIST,—I thank our God for you and myself and all men, for that eternal purpose of grace which he hath purposed in Christ, towards us, in bringing us into being, that we might be partakers of the divine nature, that we might know His will and find it to be eternal life. I thank Him that He has given us His Son to be our permanent eternal Head, through whom we have continual access to Him, and continual return to Him after all our wanderings, through whom you have strength given you to drink the bitter cup put into your hand, and to find it water of life. "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one" is the prayer of our Head for us, the prayer of Him whom the Father heareth alway. May you, my brother, unceasingly experience the answer to this prayer. May you feel the reality of that union ever growing and strengthening by all the sufferings which He sees fit to appoint for you. God is love. Love is the divine nature.

What a sight shall we have when our eyes are fully opened! But we can only be partakers of that divine nature, we can only become capable of that vision of love, by an entire submission, by consenting to be receivers. And that last lesson, I believe, He is now teaching you by this suffering. You have been always a blessing to me, a good gift from God to my soul. I hope to know you and to love you for ever. Now, He teaches us to love by ministering to us through each other! Farewell, brother beloved.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

My sisters join their affectionate sympathy with mine,

with regard to yourself, dear friend, and also with regard to your family, especially dear Madame Monod.

178. TO THE REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.

21 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 13*th Feb.* 1856.

DEAR FRIEND,—. . . . I have been reading Mr. Campbell's book on the Nature of the Atonement with great interest and sympathy. It is full of precious spiritual thought expressed in a form more adapted to the generality of minds (especially in this country of Scotland, and the dissenting English churches) than Maurice's books. I think it will influence public opinion considerably on the great subject which it treats. It deals so lovingly with those whose theories it condemns, and founds its judgment on principles which a spiritually-minded man cannot but consent to. . . .

179. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

21 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 22*d Feb.* 1856.

DEAR MR. CAMPBELL,—I am afraid that you will find it difficult to exculpate me, in my protracted silence, of forgetting that there is a righteous life in man's favour which it is righteous to desire, and which it is therefore unrighteous to withhold. But I have been anxious to read all the book[1] with my own eyes, and to read and consciously understand every clause of it, that I might be able really to testify to you the immense amount of thankful sympathy that I have felt with the book, and the spirit of its author. I have only arrived at the 324th page, and thus have not the right to speak of the whole book, but the chapter which I am reading has such a character of winding up and recapitulation in it, that I permit myself to anticipate a day, in which I expect to terminate my reading. I wish I had noted down as I went along the passages or topics which

[1] *The Nature of the Atonement*, by J. M'Leod Campbell.

more especially struck or pleased me, but this I have done very imperfectly, and only marking pages and not subjects.

You have been most happy in finding, in such a universally recognised Calvinistic authority as Edwards, the basis of your great argument. This will give your book an advantage which it could not have had by any mere address to reason and conscience.

Your intellectual type is also, in a certain measure, recognisable as national, and must attract in this country much more assent than Maurice's works.

The intercession of Christ you have, I think, specially well illustrated—the very righteousness of Christ in humanity, presenting a hope to the Father's mind for all the humanity, being a manifestation of its capacities. The 10th chapter, and those that follow it, connecting the historical detail of our Lord's life and sufferings with the principle of atonement, are excellent, as is the chapter on the necessary nature of salvation. I had hoped to write a long letter, but I am obliged to stop. I think and hope that this work is to produce much fruit, by the blessing of God. . . . .—Yours ever affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

180. TO MADAME DE STAËL.

9th May 1856.

DEAR FRIEND,—So Adolphe Monod has ceased to be seen of men. Il a "passé au Père." I had known and loved him for many years, and I can well understand the void which his death will occasion amongst his friends in Paris. His loss as a Christian minister is also very great, and not easily to be supplied. His ability as a preacher, though rare, was yet not so rare as the inward character of his spirit, his deep and tender love, his unselfishness, his unworldliness, his noble transparency, his candour, which always disposed him to give their full weight to ideas dif-

fering from his own, and at the same time his faithfulness, which kept him from any compromise of truth. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus to show us the mind of God in such circumstances. It is wonderful to think that He, who no doubt wept at the grave of Adolphe Monod, should yet have seen it needful to lay such a weight of suffering on his last days. I feel that it could only have been an infinite love contemplating an infinitely glorious result that could have inflicted that suffering. Two or three months before, I had received a letter written to his dictation (by his daughter, I suppose), but signed by himself, and addressed to Charles Scholl of Lausanne, Gaussen of Geneva, and to me, as three friends who had been specially used by God as helps to him in his spiritual life. . . .

This remarkable letter, having passed through the hands of MM. Scholl and Gaussen, was left finally in the custody of Mr. Erskine. This was done by Monod's own direction. His family have kindly given permission for its publication :—

A MM. GAUSSEN, SCHOLL, ET ERSKINE.

PARIS, 1*er Décembre* 1855.

IL y a trois amis dont j'aime à associer les noms, pour la part considérable qu'ils ont eue tous trois, en des temps, et à des titres divers, à la conversion de mon âme. Je veux leur rendre témoignage de ma reconnaissance, aujourd'hui que je m'attends à passer bientôt de ce monde au Père, et que je puise toutes mes consolations dans la foi qu'ils m'ont apprise. Ces sont Louis Gaussen, Charles Scholl, et Thomas Erskine. Le premier a opéré lentement sur mon esprit par son commerce bienveillant, par sa prédication, par ses exemples, et par ses pieux entretiens de Saligny. Le second m'a présenté l'Évangile dans des entrevues plus courtes, sous un aspect pratique, si aimable, et

en même temps si sage et si vrai, qu'il lui a gagné mon cœur. Le troisième à Genève a déraciné mes préjugés intellectuels en réconciliant dans mon esprit l'évangile avec la saine philosophie ; après quoi à Naples il a mis la dernière main à l'œuvre autant que cela dépendait de l'homme, en éclairant et tout ensemble en achevant d'attrister ma mélancolie par le contraste de sa paix parfaite et de sa tendre charité. Je n'oublierai jamais nos promenades de Capo di Monte, ni l'accent dont il me disait, à la vue du soleil se couchant sur le magnifique bassin de Naples : "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." Ces trois amis n'ont pas été seuls à travailler pour mon âme, comment oublierais-je ce que la fidélité de Frédéric a été pour nous tous, et ce qu'a fait pour moi l'humble et prudente Jeannette Picerari, sans parler d'autres amis dans ma famille ou au dehors à Genève et ailleurs ! Mais les trois amis auxquels j'adresse ces lignes ont été appelés de Dieu à exercer sur moi une influence combinée dans laquelle ils se complétaient mutuellement, sans le savoir. Je commence par donner toute gloire à Dieu, et puis je leur dis à eux-mêmes de quel amour je suis pénétré pour eux, et de quel cœur je demande à Dieu de les tenir de ses bénédictions les plus précieuses dans la vie et dans la mort en leur épargnant, s'il est possible, la fournaise par laquelle sa miséricorde me fait passer. En même temps je me recommande à leurs prières, pour qu'ils couronnent le bien qu'ils m'ont fait en demandant pour moi la grâce de ne pas laisser échapper ma patience, et de glorifier Dieu jusqu'au bout de mon combat en proportion de l'amertume de mes douleurs.

Je prie Gaussen de faire passer cette lettre à Scholl, et Scholl à Erskine ; ce sera comme un lien de plus entre eux, comme entre chacun d'eux et moi, dans l'amour de Christ.

ADOLPHE MONOD.

CHAPTER XV.

Letters from 1856 till 1862.

THE event of this period was the death of Captain Paterson. So long as the two families lived together at Linlathen he had contributed scarcely less than Mrs. Stirling to the management and the amenities of that happy home, and ever afterwards it was a most brotherly relationship that existed betwixt him and Mr. Erskine. It was his rare self-abnegation—a heart more than ordinarily at leisure from itself,—which gave him such a hold upon all connected with him.

181. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

Monday, Sept. 1, 1856.

OUR beloved friend and brother Captain Paterson died this morning. My sister and I received the information on Saturday that he was worse, and we lost no time in coming to the scene of sorrow. We arrived between four and five o'clock, and found that an oppression on the brain had already begun, and was thus making the mortal struggle much more painful to surrounding friends. The fearful conflict between life and death had been going on since Friday, and it continued with terrible violence till this morning a little after eight o'clock. There were occasional sweet recognitions and expressions of love unutterable,

especially to his wife and son, also to Mrs. Stirling and myself, and sometimes words and looks which betokened the highest things. His natural vigour made the struggle terrifically severe. But we knew him, and had long known him as one of the most humble and most faithful of our Christian brotherhood.[1] All who knew him knew this, and will feel the loss severely; but to his wife, to whom since their union he had been the most affectionate of husbands, the loss is of a character which nothing but her knowledge of the purpose of Him who made them and joined them, and who had led them through all the events of their pilgrimage, could make supportable. The first words she spoke after the spirit had escaped from the body were words of thankfulness. How precious is the knowledge of Him who hath overcome death, and Him who hath the power of death! and as His victory was through death, so He leads us by the same way.

It is impossible not to believe that He had deepest sympathy with His servant during these dark hours, and that He had not real communion with him, although the lower nature had no participation in it. Oh friend, pray for us that we may gain from this sorrow all that our Father intends for us. . . . You will write to her; you know how she values your sympathy.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

182. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LINLATHEN, 2*d Oct.* 1856.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Somehow or other Maurice's letter

[1] "Pour 35 ans il avait été un membre de notre famille, comme s'il l'avait été par naissance. C'était un homme d'une simplicité et loyauté de caractère parfait, tendre à sa femme, et affectueux à Madame Stirling et moi, et à tous nos parents, et surtout le cœur droit envers Dieu son Sauveur."—*Extract from letter to M. Cramer Mallet.*

has been lost, which I regret, chiefly because I cannot give you the words in which he expresses himself on the subject of your book. His commendation of it however is very high for its reach of thought, its logical development of thought, and the wise and loving candour of its judgment of other views. He is not particular in what he says of it, and I almost hope that he may have written to yourself about it.[1] . . .

I am reading Plato occasionally with exceeding interest.[2] Surely the spirit of Socrates saw a great light, and he was faithful to his light. If he had lived at the time of Paul's visit to Athens, I feel assured that he would have embraced the Gospel, and then what interesting dialogues we should have had! . . .—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

183. TO LADY CAROLINE CHARTERIS.

LINLATHEN, *27th Oct.* 1856

DEAR LADY CAROLINE,—I am very much obliged to you for the kind thought of sending me *les adieux* of my dear and admirable friend Adolphe Monod. The sketch

[1] This letter was afterwards recovered. In it Mr. Maurice says :—"I have wished to write to you about many things, especially about Mr. Campbell's beautiful and profoundly interesting book. . . . It was all and more than all I had expected. The serenity of it and his sympathy with those who differed from him were the qualities in it which struck me most, and made me most ashamed, though I fully recognised its logical power, and its grasp of that which is above and beneath all logic."

[2] "His literary tastes were very refined. Shakespeare was his favourite author among the moderns, and to hear Mr. Erskine quoting Shakespeare was no ordinary treat. His favourites among the ancients were Homer and Plato. He read the *Iliad* through continuously, finishing about the year 1838. Plato engaged much of his leisure time during the rest of his life. On one occasion the *Phaedo* having been referred to, he read it over, he said, while at Naples."—(Extract from letter of Dr. Richard Low of Broughty Ferry, who knew Mr. Erskine well, and to whom he was warmly attached.)

of him is exceedingly like, and gives the idea of perfect peace and patience under intense suffering. I think that portrait is one of the best sermons in the volume. . . .

I think it probable you may before now have heard of our loss. Captain Paterson was removed from this world in the end of August. He was a faithful, affectionate man. He had been married thirty-five years, and had adopted all our family connections, and had been adopted by them, as fully as if he had been of our own blood. He had suffered a great deal for the last few months; but he knew the purpose of God, and I doubt not received a large blessing through his sufferings. His loss to us all is very great, especially to his wife, than whom no woman ever had a more devoted or affectionate husband. . . .—Yours ever truly, T. ERSKINE.

184. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

38 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 18*th April* 1857.

DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—The sight of your well-known handwriting was a real joy to me. I have felt the long interruption of all direct communication, and had often purposed writing to you or to Mrs. Carlyle, but had from day to day deferred it as the manner of man is. This was the more inexcusable as I had heard from worthy Mrs. Braid[1] that Mrs. Carlyle, in whom she takes a mother's interest, had been ill. I am glad that she is now better, and in a condition to benefit by what of spring or summer may be before us. I really hope that the next visit you pay to Scotland you will come to us, and before that time I trust that this weary Fritz may be off your conscience and thrown on the consciences of other men, as incentive or warning as the truth of the matter may make him. I

[1] A remarkable woman, an old nurse of Mrs. Carlyle, living near Edinburgh, whom Mr. Erskine frequently visited.

suppose that he shows us what a strong will and a clear insight without a conscience can do for a man. To me it is a most unpleasing spectacle—a German king confining his kinghood to leading armies, and extending frontiers and setting up *par gout* as a French wit and a ribald free-thinker. I would much rather be honest Mrs. Braid selling flour and bacon, and lovingly bearing the burden of her bed-rid son.

Yes, dear Mr. Carlyle, friends are getting fewer and fewer. Here I have scarcely one now out of my own immediate relations in whom I have the confidence of thorough intimacy except James Mackenzie, whose memory goes back and whose hope goes forward in pleasant music. Our University here narrowly missed getting Scott for Professor of Logic the other day, which I greatly lament both for her sake and ours. I believe the Free Kirk bears the sin of it.

My sisters, especially Mrs. Paterson, are and have been rather weakly. The loss in that house won't soon be forgotten. They think of you both with real affection, as I do.—Ever truly yours, T. ERSKINE.

185. TO MRS. SCHWABE.

LINLATHEN, *9th Sept.* 1857.

MY DEAR MRS. S.,—I have read the sermon of Mr. Martineau which you wished me to read, with deep interest and much sympathy. I have felt along with him what a hopeless, desolate state men would be in, were they necessitated to scream out their wants and sorrows to a being separated from them by an impassable gulf; and I have also felt what a deadly chill it throws over the universe to substitute eternal laws for an infinite Father. I have indeed found that the only deliverance for man lies in the living union of God with humanity, and

not an historical matter, but an eternal spiritual order. If Christianity be true, it must be the only real natural religion, that is, it must explain all the true spiritual and moral consciousness within us, just as the theory of Newton, if true, must explain all the phenomena of the heavenly bodies. The fact of conscience is the great spiritual fact in man's nature. Well, what is conscience? Is it merely part and parcel of myself? Christianity says that it is the presence of God's light, and life, and love, met by a spiritual capacity in us of apprehending it; and that it is there not as a spy or as a taskmaster, but as a loving guide, and helper, and comforter—that it is the divine spirit of sonship, to assure us of the unchangeable fatherliness of God's purpose towards us, and to accomplish that purpose in all who will yield themselves to it, making them indeed sons of God. This presence dwells in each of us, connecting us with each other, and connecting all with God; thus we are all specimens of that wonderful combination, God and man united, the divine element issuing out of God into us all, not direct from the great Father, but modified by passing through a human heart, and thus full of all holy human sympathies; that human heart is the heart of Jesus, the head and root of the race, our elder brother, like us, yet differing from us in this, that in us is seen the humanity indwelt by God, in Him is seen God assuming the humanity. He has passed through human life and human death bearing all our burdens—the burden of our sins and the burden of our sorrows—the true Saviour, the true King, connected with every individual of the race, not only by a bond of love, but a bond of relation of brotherhood, a bond which can never be broken. He presents to us our Father's character, He presents to the Father His own accomplished idea and purpose in the creation of man; He stands in that relation to us, that He may make us like-minded to

Himself; that is, that He may bring our wills into conformity with the Father's, not that they should be lost in that highest will, but that they may become loving and intelligent recipients of it. Thus only can the desire of God for man be accomplished; for thus only can man become a partaker of God's life, of God's blessedness; and all this without the danger of self-exaltation, for man is to continue always a receiver. There is, in my mind, something unspeakably sweet, and loving, and righteous in this constitution of things.

God does not give us each a private stock of wisdom and strength, by which we may work out an independent righteousness, on which we may stand and negotiate with Him and our fellow-creatures, but He creates us with a capacity of receiving or rejecting, and thus maintaining our moral responsibility, and then He wells out of His own infinite fulness the supply of all our needs, thus imparting to all His gifts the character of loving fellowship, like that father in the parable who said, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine—were I to give you an independent provision it would break this loving bond. One feels too that it is righteous that the fountain should be acknowledged as the fountain; and thus we see that there is nothing arbitrary in the declaration that faith is man's righteousness. Faith means dependence, recipiency, and that assuredly is the only right place for man to occupy, and thus only can he rise out of the religion of obedience into the religion of communion, as Mr. Martineau happily expresses it. . . .

Dear friend, I must ask you not to show this letter to any one, but just to keep it in your own thought and conscience. I have written it without any care, and on looking it over I see that it is not very accurate or logical, but that may pass with a friend; I believe it to be true.

186. TO MRS. BLACKWELL.

LINLATHEN, 10*th Sept.* 1857.

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . You will have heard of dear Lady Matilda's[1] sudden departure, and I am sure that you would think of us as fellow-mourners with her own family. She was a shining light, and many rejoiced in her light, receiving guidance and consolation from her. It would be well for us if we could learn to trust God as we trust those of our fellow-creatures whom we really believe to be good and loving. We could all name individuals, alive or dead, in whose love for us we had such confidence, that we should feel satisfied that our eternal interests would be quite safe in their hands, if they had only wisdom and power enough. If we believed that they had the requisite wisdom and power, we should receive every appointment, painful or otherwise, with perfect acquiescence, knowing that it must be for our true good. My daily endeavour is to learn this same lesson in relation to God. I am sure He created me and all men to be partakers in His own eternal life. This I believe is contained in the truth that He created us in Christ. Now this purpose of God I believe to be unchangeable, and that He will follow it on, until it be accomplished. The Shepherd goes after the lost sheep until he finds it. I am persuaded that this is an eternal truth, and the only foundation on which a man who feels himself a sinner—self-destroyed—can lay himself down all his length in absolute trust. . . .

Do not be afraid of what I have written, my dear friend. It is good news, but not too good to be true. It is the triumph of truth, and holiness, and love. It is the victory

[1] Lady Matilda Bruce, second daughter of Thomas, seventh Earl of Elgin, became, in 1839, the wife of Sir John Maxwell, Bart., of Pollok.

of Him who says to us, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

187. TO LADY CAROLINE CHARTERIS.

LINLATHEN, 19*th Sept.* 1857.

YES, dear Lady Caroline, we cannot doubt but that her removal from this world was an entrance into a happier and brighter state, yet the loss to those who were used to lean on her and to get counsel and comfort from her must be great. I have almost never known any one so universally approved of, by persons of all descriptions, and certainly few have possessed so many loving and admiring friends. All who knew her loved her, and looked to her as something above the common reach of humanity. Dear Sir John must indeed be very desolate. I can realise those looks asking for sympathy and acknowledging it when given. I am glad that W. Stirling has such a mission given to him. It is good for the heart to try to heal such wounds, to soothe such sorrows. He loved and prized her well, and he must feel that any consolation which can reach his uncle's heart at this time must come from behind the veil. . . . Farewell, dear friend.

T. ERSKINE.

188. TO MR. MAURICE.

LINLATHEN, 24*th Nov.* 1857.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—It is a long time since I have had direct communication with you. I am now, however, impelled to send you a word by the grateful feelings produced by reading your sermons for the day of humiliation and the following Sunday. I rejoice to read such things, and to know that they must be read by many. I wish our missionaries could read and understand them, that they

might not weary themselves by attempting to displace one set of dogmas and substitute another, but that they might commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God, by declaring the common Father, who is drawing all men into fellowship with Himself by that true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. If they claimed all honesty and truthfulness and kindness—every act of self-sacrificing generosity and uprightness—as Christianity, they could not fail meeting a response in every heart. They speak of traces of humanity being most visible in all faiths and forms—why not say that humanity is Christianity? For what else is it? Were there not that true light in man, were not the Son of God in him, where would his humanity be? And this, every man who feels the difference between himself and the brutes is not only capable of apprehending, but has a latent desire to apprehend. "Thou hearest His voice, but thou knowest not whence it cometh and whither it leadeth." And this great explanation is the charm which frees the man from his fears and selfishness and slavery to visible things. If Christ be that Word, that Light, then everything according with them is Christianity—not like Christianity, but actual Christianity.

I am glad to think that your trumpet gives no uncertain sound. When shall we begin to realise that Christianity is not a religion got up either by God or man; but that it is the practical acknowledgment of man's actual condition as a spiritual being, of God's mind towards him, and of the relation in which he stands to God and to his fellow-creatures? . . . Ever yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

189. TO MR. MAURICE.

38 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 6 *Jan.* 1858.

MY DEAR MR. MAURICE,—Your Christian Ethics, for

which I have to give you most earnest though tardy thanks, have been full of interest to me—good seed I should say, which I hope may bear good fruit in many hearts. I desire to know more and more the importance of learning Christ, rather than Christianity; the living, loving almighty Lord of our spirits, rather than the logic about Him. I have also to thank you for the sermons on India. I admire your unexhausted prolificness, and the beautiful ordering of the ἕν and the πολλά through your creation. . . .—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

190. TO MRS. BURNETT.

LINLATHEN, 13 *Sept.* 1858.

WE have had Mr. M'Murtrie[1] with us for some days, and have been much pleased with his gentle, earnest ways. I have heard him once, and I trust that he may be a spiritual awakener and helper to many. We have had a great deal of conversation on the great subjects on which a minister has to instruct his hearers, and he seems to feel deeply that he cannot instruct others in anything which his own heart has not learned first itself.

191. TO LADY CAROLINE CHARTERIS.

LINLATHEN, 6*th Oct.* 1858.[2]

DEAR LADY CAROLINE,— . . . Poor Dean Ramsay! He is a kindly, sociable man, and he must feel his loneliness very much, and at present these painful disputes and trials amongst our Episcopalian clergy must harass his mind.

[1] Mr. Robertson's successor as minister of the parish of Mains, now of Edinburgh.

[2] "1858 was a sad year for the Dean. Mrs. Ramsay had been very ill, and sinking in strength and spirit till on the 23d July the afflicted husband makes this entry: 'It pleased God to visit me with the deep and terrible affliction of taking away my friend, companion, and adviser of twenty-nine years.'"—*Memoirs of Dean Ramsay*, by Cosmo Innes, p. 48.

Our bishop here did, I think, much evil in stirring the question,[1] which I believe in the minds of many people means just nothing at all. The consecration of the bread and wine cannot mean changing their nature, but simply using them in worship—using them, according to the last instructions of our Lord, in remembrance of Him. Faith means trust in our Father's loving purpose towards us in Jesus Christ, that we should be the living members of His body, partakers of the Divine nature. This is a faith which saves us from fear and worldliness and selfishness; and are we called to exchange this faith for faith in an unintelligible mystery, a necromancy, which says nothing either to the reason or to the heart? Such notions must make many infidels. I am going to Polloc on Friday. I may perhaps take a look of Noel Paton's picture as I pass through Edinburgh. Best regards to Lady Jane. My sister, Mrs. Paterson, has been worse these last days.—Yours most truly,

T. ERSKINE.

192. TO MRS. SCHWABE.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 14*th Feb.* 1859.

DEAR FRIEND,—How shall I tell you of the affliction it has pleased God to lay upon us? Jane Stirling has been taken from this world, doubtless to her own great gain, and doubtless for our good, could we understand it aright. In the meantime, however, it is a deep sorrow, a removal of what was the light and joy of many hearts. She was ill for eight weeks, and suffered a great deal. . . . I know you will feel this deeply, for you could appreciate the purity and beauty of that stream of love which flowed through her whole life. I don't think that I ever knew any one who seemed more entirely to have given up self, and devoted

[1] The question as to the Eucharist, raised at this time in the Scottish Episcopal Church by the Bishop of Brechin.—See *Life of Bishop Ewing.*

her whole being to the good of others. I remember her birth like yesterday, and I never saw anything in her but what was lovable from the beginning to the end of her course. . . . It is a voice to us out of the invisible eternity, which we ought to seek to understand.

193. TO MR. MAURICE.

LINLATHEN, *28th June* 1859.

MY DEAR MAURICE,—I have to thank you for the renewed proof of your much-valued remembrance of me, which the arrival of Mr. Macmillan's packet has brought me. I feel the importance of your subject, and hope to feel it more deeply, more practically day by day. To live in the Spirit is the right condition of man, his normal condition, out of which he is out of order; and to live in the Spirit is to live with God—hearing Him, and knowing Him, and loving Him, and delighting to do His will. When I think how little I know of this order, or see it known by others, I do not wonder that some should think that there is no such order; and yet the man who makes this denial has occasional thoughts which make him feel that he has no right to make it; because, if there is an unknown God, there is also an unknown self, whose capacities he has not yet tried or measured.

"Thou hearest His voice, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it leadeth; but he who is born of the Spirit does." And one may be born of the Spirit for a day, and relapse again into the abnormal state, and almost forget what he has seen and known in that day. "Abide in me," is the perfect law of liberty. I think that, if a man has once felt what the meaning of that word of our Lord is, "If thine eye offend thee," etc., that is to say, if he has felt that there are things in him, roots of evil and memories of their fruits, which must be cast out—else he keeps within

him an unquenchable fire, which no sweet, oblivious antidote can ever purge his bosom of, which no mere forgiveness, even of God, can rid him of,—he must also feel that he can only have deliverance through a knowledge of God, which implies a participation in the divine nature and the divine righteousness.—Yours ever affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

The voice of His judgments is heard through the nations and he that hath ears to hear let him hear.

194. TO MR. MAURICE.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 15*th Nov.* 1860.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I knew Irving a little, but not enough to be able to give much help towards such a work as Mrs. Oliphant is undertaking. What is in my power, however, I shall be most happy to do. We intend to go to Edinburgh, 14 Charlotte Square, about the 1st December, for the winter. If she will call or send her address there, I shall wait on her. I should have liked to have seen the life of Irving written by one who had known him personally; for all that ever he did or said, although accurately given, would be a very inadequate expression of Edward Irving. Carlyle and Scott knew him well, and have very living portraits of him in their own hearts. Scott cannot speak of him without becoming Irving in voice and manner, even in countenance.

Scott is to deliver a course of lectures in Edinburgh this winter, and if his time coincides with Mrs. Oliphant's, she will have an opportunity of talking with him about Irving, which I am sure will be very gratifying to them both. Dear Mr. Maurice, could you not be of the party? Unless you come down, I cannot look forward to seeing you again; for I cannot go to London, and I feel that there are many things on which I should like to hear you speak, and to

speak to you. Yes, this last year has been a wonderful year for Italy; and she has many struggles before her still. God gave her a great gift in Garibaldi, a gift which will yet more be needed, I doubt not, before long. The world has had a Rome before, but never an Italy, though many Italians. Will the fall of the Vicar lead to the manifestation of the Lord?—Yours ever affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

195. TO DR. WYLIE OF CARLUKE.

. . . I HAVE been reading over Dr. Carlyle's (of Inveresk) autobiography with much shame and disgust. It is evident that at that time a large proportion of the clergy of Scotland thought it their chief business to get associated with a circle of jovial, cheerful, clever companions, with whom they might eat good dinners and drink good claret when they could get them, and spend their lives with as little care and annoyance as possible. Unless one could hope that the spiritual education of these people was to go on after death, one could see nothing for them but the blackest horror. These were the instructors of the people of Scotland at that period in spiritual things, and they had no conception of the existence of a spiritual world, no thought of an actual presence of God in them. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." I remember the old man, with his beautiful grey locks; but what a picture does he give of himself and his friends! . . .

196. TO THE REV. ALEX. J. SCOTT.

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 28*th March* 1862.

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . I forget whether you knew Mr. Cayley; he was a Parliamentary friend of Sir John Maxwell, who made us acquainted with him. He had been brought up a Unitarian, and was a most intelligent

and amiable man. Sir John has been very weakly for a long time, and very dependent on society. Cayley came down to Polloc always during the Parliamentary vacations, and was his constant companion and never-failing resource. He was rather delicate, but he never at all gave me the idea of being near death, yet soon after he had left this—last month or in the end of January —for the purpose of meeting his constituents, he became seriously ill and died. I cannot tell you how much I was impressed by him whilst he was here in Edinburgh for three days, on his way south; he had a joy in God that filled him continually, and which seemed to astonish himself as much as it could do others. He had found the pearl of great price. I have seen such sights, but they are rare. My sisters would join in affectionate regards to you all.—Ever truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

197. TO LADY AUGUSTA STANLEY.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, *July* 20, 1862.

DEARLY BELOVED,—I have read your kind letter over with a sense of great unworthiness. It seems to me almost like *wickedness* to hesitate about accepting an invitation so lovingly given, but I remember that I am half way between seventy and eighty, and I have always a fear upon me that something may occur which may make me a burden and a nuisance, and this feeling not only deters me from leaving home, but gives me a certain restlessness when I break through my rule. There are few faces that I like to see so well as yours, not only for its own dear sake, but because it is to me the *in memoriam* of another, the outward and visible sign, as it were, of something holy which has disappeared from this earth; so that it is from no lack of love that I decline. The only time I ever saw Broomhall was

very long ago, long before you "*had arrived*," before even, I think, your father and mother were married. I went there with one or two of my Cardross cousins to see your father and his three little girls, whose faces I remember well. How many histories have commenced and terminated, outwardly at least, since then!

198. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

LINLATHEN, 1*st Oct.* 1862.

I HAVE been reading over the 12th, 13th, and 14th of 1st Corinthians. It is a very remarkable passage. Paul seems to have been almost as much troubled by these manifestations as Irving was, and he seems to have escaped by seeing that they did not stand in that authoritative place that Irving ascribed to them. The 19th verse of the 14th chapter gives me the same impression that I used to receive from a comparison of the Row teaching with the Port-Glasgow manifestations thirty-two years ago. He, Paul, seems really to have set little store comparatively by the manifestations in the Corinthian Church.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

199. TO MR. MAURICE.

LINLATHEN, 11*th Oct.* 1862.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—We had lately the pleasure of seeing your young artilleryman[1] here, whom we found to be a very agreeable member of society, full of intelligence and information. We shall hope to see more of him when we go into Edinburgh for the winter, which will be in the beginning of November.

You, I suppose, are much occupied about Colenso's matters, which no doubt are difficult, and require the

[1] Captain Frederick Maurice.

wisdom which is from above—that wisdom which teaches us *how* to bear one another's burdens—the burdens of Zooloos, and High Church and Low Church, etc. etc.

Our Lord taught men as they were able to bear it; and Moses, for the hardness of their hearts, allowed various things; but it is difficult to draw boundaries.

If the Bible is a book of teaching, it must contain matter for beginners as well as for the initiated; and yet to talk of degrees of spiritual truth is to some minds an entire subversion of authority, and we ought to bear the burden of such as well as of others.

An implicit faith, however, means no faith at all; it implies an entire ignoring of what our Lord meant to teach when He said, "All who are of the truth are my subjects." . . .

A friend of mine died last week at the age of eighty-two, who had for fifty years suffered uninterruptedly from neuralgia.[1] Many years ago he told me that for twenty years he had never been so sound asleep as to lose the consciousness of suffering. He died praising God for His tender mercies, which had led him all his journey through. —Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

200. TO THE REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.

LINLATHEN, *4th Nov.* 1862.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—What a rest it is to the spirit to know that the Lord reigneth, and that He will put all evil under His feet! We are all getting on now to the end of our journey, and whilst I have to thank God for His unceasing love and care and goodness, yet I have to agree with you in saying that I can look back upon nothing in my whole life that I do not more or less condemn and grieve over. . . . This publication by the Bishop of Natal on the

[1] Ludovic Houston, Esq. of Johnstone Castle.

non-historical character of the Exodus is a remarkable fact, which may shake much of that faith which does not rest on God alone. I grieve for it, and yet I believe the man to be an earnest and good man. I have myself always been seeking for a self-evidencing light in divine truth not resting on any authority whatever, but children must begin by trusting to authority, and throughout this land 999 out of every 1000 are children.—Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

P.S.—Dear friend, I am as thoroughly persuaded as I am of my own existence that God will not be overcome of evil, but will overcome evil with good, and I am therefore not much disturbed by one or two difficult passages which seem to point to a different result. . . .

201. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

CHARLOTTE SQ., EDINR., 21*st Nov.* 1862.

MY DEAR BROTHER,— . . . And now what shall I say about this most painful subject of Colenso? Such things have been suggested before by enemies; but here a friend, though it may be an unwise one, yet certainly one who desires to be a Christian and to promote Christianity, has published a work which seems to sap the foundation of traditional faith. That he has been rash I cannot doubt. He ought to have kept his MS. unprinted for years, subjecting it to the examination of all competent friends and philologians. His knowledge of Hebrew literature and philology cannot be great, having begun so lately. Then every one knows that numerals are most liable to be corrupted and miscopied. But we shall have opportunities of talking over these things at length when you come to Warriston. . . .—Believe me ever your loving brother,

T. ERSKINE.

202. TO THE REV. ALEX. J. SCOTT.

3 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 11*th Feb.* 1864.

. . . WHAT an immense change would be made in the conscious personal religion of men, as well as in their theology, by understanding that they were made to be educated, not to be tried; and therefore that trial is in order to education, not education in order to trial. Thou wilt not be overcome of evil, but wilt overcome evil with good. You were the person that showed me first how all Divine precepts testified to Divine character, and consequently how we are entitled to look to God for this optimism. And in analogy with this, how we are entitled and justified in applying to God everything that we have experienced of amiable or conceived of amiable in our fellow-creatures. I am carried back to the shore of the Gareloch in 1830, when I walked and talked with you; and I am carried farther back, to my own brother, who died in the '16, and whose memory has been such a blessed help to me in my relation to Jesus, and my realisation of the character of God. "If ye then being evil, how much more." Is there not a real rest for man's spirit in this,—a rest upon a rock?

There are many things which I should like to talk with you about, and at some period there will be opportunity enough.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

203. TO DEAN STANLEY.

3 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 4*th April* 1864.

MY DEAR DEAN STANLEY,— . . . Your Church seems to be in a sad mess at present,[1]—many truly earnest men

[1] Referring to the publication of *Essays and Reviews*, and Colenso *On the Pentateuch*.

afraid that the foundation of all their spiritual hopes is to be swept away by criticism, and forgetting that any revelation, whether inspired or uninspired, must owe its whole value to its being the discovery of truth which remains true independently of that revelation, and which can be profitable to us only in so far as it produces a conviction in our minds, from its own light, unaffected by the inspiration or non-inspiration of the revelation.

In this whole discussion there seems to me to lurk the idea that the dogmas of Christianity are imposed on us not as helps or guides, but as exercises of obedience and submission. I believe, on the contrary, that they are given for the purpose of explaining to us our relations with the spiritual world. What are the dogmas suited for domestic life? Suppose a man entering as a stranger into a house, from which he had been carried away as an infant, and needing guidance for his conduct there. The dogmas would be, "that old man is your father, that old woman your mother, these are uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters, there is an old servant who saved your life in your childhood," etc. etc. We don't know our duties apart from our relations, and the knowledge of our relations helps us to the performance as well as the knowledge of our duties. To suppose that such domestic truths are, in the case supposed, given as exercises of faith, and to be received whether understood or not, would be too absurd; and yet it would be less absurd than in the case of the Christian dogmas, because these are not merely facts, but the vehicles and expressions of principles, recognisable by our spiritual understanding, as eternal and necessary truths. Plato's doctrine of *ἀνάμνησις* would be a help to them, if they would use it. . . .—Ever truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

204. TO MRS. A. J. SCOTT.

3 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 18*th April* 1864.

DEAR MRS. SCOTT,— . . . I cannot doubt that Mr. Scott has read Renan's "Life of Jesus;" I should have liked to have talked with him about it. I am not satisfied with any of the reviews of it. I don't think that Renan's criticism is to be met by criticism, but by showing what an empty gospel he makes of it, and what a real gospel he puts away, and also by showing what a true rationalism there lies in what he rejects as untenable in reason.

God's training of spirits endowed with free-will into His own sympathy is evidently a higher thing than the ordering of the material world, and we ought not therefore to suppose that the plan of that training is to be subordinated to what we see or know of these lower laws. Renan has evidently never awakened to the consciousness of that tremendous capacity of suffering that exists in the heart of man, else he would feel the necessity of finding a remedy and a refuge in the heart of an almighty, all-wise, and all-loving Creator. Love is to Renan an object of tasteful admiration, not the one great spiritual power in the universe.

We are at present in a distress. We have the Bishop of Argyll with us, and he has been taken ill.

Give our kind regards to your sister from us all.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

205. TO LADY AUGUSTA STANLEY.

31 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 11*th Feb.* 1865.

DEARLY BELOVED,—I have received, and read, and sympathised with the lecture[1] which you had the kindness to

[1] A lecture on the "Theology of the Nineteenth Century," by the Dean of Westminster, read at a meeting of the London clergy, the substance of which appeared in "Fraser's Magazine" for February 1865.

send to me. I should like to have a talk with the author on the various subjects touched so well and lovingly in it.

There is a point which I have often wished to see more illustrated and enforced than it is generally, and that is the adaptation of the Christian dogma (when believed) to produce the Christian character. Paul speaks of the Gospel as being THE POWER *of God unto salvation*, that is, as containing the *dynamics*, so to speak, the spiritual lever, and ropes, and pulleys, and wheels by which the human spirit may be lifted out of the horrible pit and miry clay of sin and selfishness into a harmony with the mind of God, so that a real apprehension of the character of God and His purposes towards us, and our relation to Him, without any mention of the precepts, would spontaneously produce the life of them within our souls.

Renan complains of the Christian dogmas as encumbrances on the beautiful morality of the Sermon on the Mount, not considering whether it would be possible to obey those precepts by mere effort, and without knowing what the dogmas teach of the spiritual relations in which we stand both to God and man. A man could not possibly fulfil his duties as the member of a domestic circle, unless he knew what that circle was composed of, and what the place which he himself held in it. . . .—With kindest regards to the Dean, yours most affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

CHAPTER XVI.

Records of a Visit to Linlathen in the Autumn of 1865.

Mrs. Rich, whose name appears often in these pages, was the eldest daughter of Sir James Mackintosh, and the widow of one who, but for his early death, would perhaps have been equally well known. Claudius James Rich was the precursor of Layard and Rawlinson on the field of Oriental discovery, and as resident at Bagdad a protector so prized by an oppressed people that thirty years after his death a traveller on the Tigris, asking the meaning of some plaintive dirge sung by the peasants, learned that it was a lament for him. With him, in exclusion of all other society whatever but the visits of chance travellers, Mrs. Rich spent fourteen years of peculiar happiness and absorbing devotion, and his sudden death by cholera during a short absence of his wife's converted that happiness into a desolation as intense and unmitigated. She became acquainted with Mr. Erskine when the first profound grief had been complicated with others, and the devout life which had succeeded to the earlier phase of intense feeling had taken a strong hold upon her. Fifty years ago all religion which was at once manifest and intense was of that kind which is generally described as evangelical, and her first religious associations were formed with persons professing that form of Christian-

ity. It had much to attract, but much also to repel her, and her friendship with Mr. Erskine and Mr. Scott was the opening to her of a world where the intensity of belief in the invisible, the fervent hatred of sin, the profound belief in the enduring reality and supreme significance of the work of Christ, which are generally associated with that school, were joined to a confidence in the universality of the love of God and of its ultimate triumph in the case of every human spirit, which were at that time, and indeed are more or less at every time, apt to be associated with a low standard of holiness and a poor estimate of the spiritual life. Mrs. Rich felt it a great crisis in her life when Mr. Erskine whispered to her the wide hopes which, in the religious society of half a century ago, it was not easy and perhaps not desirable to express openly. She became one of his dearest friends, though in later life circumstances kept them much apart.

The following letters were addressed to her niece, Miss Wedgwood, who, happening to have been born in a snowstorm, had a name bestowed on her in the familiar parlance of family and friends, which the special affection he cherished for her led Mr. Erskine to employ :—

206. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

POLLOC HOUSE, GLASGOW, 18*th May* 1865.

BELOVED SNOW,— . . . The evidence of a spiritual state which continually forces itself upon me is the demand which my conscience makes on me for qualities and feelings which would not be at all necessary, if this outward social order were all. To do actions beneficial to society and to abstain from actions hurtful to society would be enough; but love and holiness, and trust in an unseen, are demanded by my conscience, and are necessary for my peace, still more than any outward actions

whatever, and I cannot meet these demands without knowing something of the nature of that spiritual world of which they are the natural laws. My whole being is a contradiction if there be not a spiritual world and if I do not belong to it. But it is impossible that my being should be a contradiction. I feel that goodness and truth and righteousness are realities, eternal realities, and that they cannot be abstractions or vapours floating in a spiritual atmosphere, but that they necessarily imply a living personal will, a good, loving, righteous God, in whose hands we are perfectly safe, and who is guiding us by unfailing wisdom. I have known in my life two or three persons who, I knew, honestly and earnestly and unceasingly endeavoured to help me to be a right man; and now, in looking back on these persons, I feel what a deep confidence this purpose of theirs inspired me with, and I am conscious of having a similar confidence in God through all varieties in His treatment of me, because I have in my conscience the continual proof that He never for a moment relaxes His earnest purpose that I should be right.

Dear friend, I write these fragmentary sentences from the hope that you may catch hold of something in them which may help you to take hold of God. There is nothing else which can do us any good. If I believe in God, in a Being who made me, and fashioned me, and knows my wants and capacities and necessities, because He gave them to me, and who is perfectly good and loving, righteous, and perfectly wise and powerful, whatever my circumstances inward or outward may be, however thick the darkness which encompasses me, I yet can trust, yea, be assured, that all will be well, that He can draw light out of darkness, and make crooked things straight. Without such a thought of God, the consciousness of being embarked in an unending existence, out of which we cannot extricate ourselves, would

be a horror insupportable, but I know that He can make it not only supportable, but a real and continual joy and a reason for continual thankfulness.

"Que mon âme vive qu'elle te loue." Dear Madame de Broglie used to repeat that verse the last year of her life as the chief expression of her feeling.

Yes, beloved Snow, we shall yet see a moral law of gravitation doing in the world of spirits that which the material law of gravitation does in this visible system of things; we yet shall see the infinite righteous love of God attracting all hearts, and uniting them to Himself and to each other, and filling them all out of His fulness.

Farewell. I may be here for a few days longer; but Linlathen will be my proper address through the summer. —Ever yours very affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

I am just looking at some beautiful fragrant flowers, and they seem to me to say so much of the gentleness and tenderness of their Creator. What do they represent? Can we say when they are before us that we have no evidence of the love and righteousness of God? But still the demand of righteousness within us is the chiefest evidence, —an evidence which the dismal condition of the human race does not seem to me at all to shake. God is in no hurry, and man requires a long and varied process.

207. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 12*th June* 1865.

MY DEAR SNOW,—I feel that what ought to be, must be, and is, so that when I am satisfied that a thing ought to be, I feel justified in regarding it as a reality. A universe without a right and good purpose in creating, sustaining, and guiding it, is a thing which I am sure ought not to be, and cannot be. I believe in good—in the existence of good.

I cannot help believing in it; but I am sure good cannot exist without a will, and so I find that my belief in good actually implies my belief in God, the living Fountain of good.

Is my inner sense, my conscience, less to be trusted than my outward senses? Have I firmer reason to believe in an outward world than in an inward? I think not. I believe in the reality of goodness and rightness, at least as much as I do in the reality of earth and water. In fact, I could not feel justified in ascribing reality to the outward world at all, in a true sense; it does not seem to have a necessary existence, as the other has.

The beauty and order of the material world seem to me to contain an assurance that in the higher region of creation, in the moral world, a similar order will yet take place, and must take place. I am sure that if all hearts were filled with righteous love, all the present confusion and misery would disappear from the earth. I see a preparation for this result in the capacity of love as a part of our organisation, and in the capacity of apprehending God as a centre of attraction. This is a very refreshing thought, dear Snow; look at it kindly and cordially. I cannot love that which is unloveable, directly, or in itself, but I can arrive at loving it through another. I cannot be right or happy till I love all men, and yet there is something exceedingly unloveable in almost all men. How am I to get over this difficulty? If I see that there is a God, and that there is a real loveableness in God, so that I can love Him, and if I see that He loves me and all other unloveable men with a love which desires to make me and them worthier both of His love and of each other's love, I can as it were ascend by the ray of love which comes from His heart to myself, and from that heart survey, in its own light, all the objects of its love, entering into its

sympathies and longings and desires concerning them. This ought to be—therefore is.

I have just been engaged in a wonderful history. When I left Edinburgh three weeks ago, I went, as my habit has been for some years, to visit an old friend at his house in the country. He was a sufferer from rheumatic pains and from injuries sustained by falls in hunting in his earlier life; but he was in his usual health, having recovered from an influenza which had laid him up a short time before. After I had been nearly a fortnight with him, and when I was preparing to come away, he pressed me to stay a day or two longer to see his nephew, an old friend and relative of mine whom he was expecting. I stayed a day or two, and saw him in the course of that time hurried out of life and laid out a corpse on his bed. I have scarcely been able to realise it—it seems like a troubled dream; the merely phenomenal character of all outward things has been pressed in upon me by it, whilst the deep eternal reality of God, and of our relation to Him, has commended itself to me more strongly. . . .—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

The result of this correspondence was a visit paid to Linlathen in the month of September, of which a journal was kept by Miss Wedgwood, and transmitted to London with the object of bringing Mr. Erskine near to her aunt Mrs. Rich, as it proved for the last time in this world. Some extracts from this journal are now presented to the reader:—

LINLATHEN, 1865.

I think what I feel specially valuable in him, distinct from all other religious people I know, is his intense consciousness and realising of all the difficulties and mysteries of this life, combined with his perfect trust in

the purpose of this life as education. I know others who have the last, and of course many many who have the first, but the union of the two I think I never saw but in him; he looks not across the mysterious gulf of evil merely, but through it. It is not any ignoring, any silence in his spirit about the hideous abyss, but it is seeing an object which makes all worth while, and a strength that can not only bridge it over, but change it. . . . I feel Mr. Erskine is always saying to himself, as indeed he has said once or twice since I came here, "It is the best thing that is offered each of us; we cannot see it, but it is the best thing." . . .

One thing reminded me of you so much—it was in speaking of the subject you and I have often discussed, of families separating,—and his words struck me, "It is neglecting the finger-posts," he said,—which seems to me so exactly what it is. In some rare cases, no doubt, a person may find a better path by neglecting the finger-posts, but almost never. I liked the way he dwelt on the blessing of our circumstances being made for us, it is so much what one is tempted to forget just now: "It is a great evil to refuse to understand our circumstances, but we never shall understand them, or God's purpose in them, till we have become partners in effecting it. We do not first see the meaning of our education, and then yield to it, but we see it as we yield, or rather as we take up our share, for we must become active in it. And yet it is not all volition. There must be something in it that our will cannot produce."

He was speaking at one time of Judas, and the strange fact that to a sordid nature like his it should have been allotted to take care of the purse, so that it seemed as if God had encouraged what was wrong in him, giving him an opportunity of evil. "But then the opportunity of evil is the opportunity of good. The temptation may be made

the deliverance. A friend of mine once repeated to me a sentence out of a sermon that he thought utter nonsense, but to me it seemed to have a meaning in it,—'What were rocks made for, my brethren? Even that mariners might avoid them!'" I rather agreed with his friend; but I saw what he meant by the words,—that there was a gain in having avoided rocks which there would not be in rocks never having existed. But he saw the Irishism of the saying of course very clearly.

Then another time he said a thing that struck me very much—I don't mean that I had never thought it myself, but the words as they came from him seemed fuller,—"Right is always right, and wrong always wrong, but the indications of right and wrong are very different, and vary from age to age; in our own day what we have to learn is that the indications of wrong (as we have thought them) may be found along with right and the indications of right along with wrong. There was a time when the watchword of a party was so closely linked with the reality that people did not see the difference. I do not think it is so now; Paul preached *Jesus*. That word was enough then. Now it may mean anything." I cannot tell you how it impressed me, the way he said this; but perhaps I have hardly conveyed to you all that it meant for me.

Sept. 5, 1865.

We were speaking of the Bible, and the present critical spirit towards it. "I think," he said, "we shall learn to value the Bible more as we grow independent of it. I do value parts of the Bible exceedingly, but I do not feel that I depend upon it. When I find a small despised people from the first asserting a righteousness in the Divine Being which I do not find in the gods of more enlightened nations, I cannot feel that this is mere

accident. This was the teaching of God. But then, when I come upon discrepancies in the narratives which are very definite and striking, neither can I ignore them, and I feel that *this* is not inspiration. The records are the vehicle of principles which are true independently of the records, and which criticism cannot touch." "But then," I said, "my difficulty is that I do not see how to reconcile the spirit that the Bible demands with the critical spirit of our time, and yet I feel that this last may be a right spirit; all that is valuable in our time is critical." "Yes, we cannot crush it, we must accept it. But the object of criticism is that which is variable. The object of faith is that which is unchanging, which is true *being*. Now I have no difficulty in receiving the fact of miracle. But if any one has, I do not conceive that he is thereby debarred from entering into the spirit of Christianity. The one is a fact, the other is a principle. The two things can never come into collision with each other." . . .

"When we are perplexed by the sight of creatures who seem to be receiving no education, or worse than none, who are debased by all the suffering they have gone through, I think the only answer is to reflect upon the infinite variety of function that we are called upon to fill, and the infinite variety consequently of education necessary for this purpose. Christ is the head, and the members are various, each represented by numbers of human beings, and sometimes no doubt some seem in a very much lower position than others; but when we remember the oneness of life in which all partake there is nothing of degradation in that variety. All form one body, and every member of that body needs a different training. God knows the least necessities of each. Think of the number of infants that die under a year old. We cannot suppose they go *out of school*. Why should it be any difficulty to us that after a

long life many should leave this world as much in need of prolonged discipline? Everything in our experience seems, if I may say so, to indicate something very lengthy. God is in no hurry with us, let us be in no hurry with Him." . . .

"I wonder it is not a greater difficulty in the theory of Renan, that the fourth Gospel contains no moral teaching at all. Every word which Jesus utters there refers to Himself. Now is it possible to feel any admiration for Him, and not to feel that the being who could speak thus must be more than man? If he is not God, he cannot be a good man. No mere man could use such language of himself, and retain his right to our reverence." . . .

I asked him about the passage, John x. 34, 36, which seems a difficulty in connection with this view.

"Yes, it seems like diluting His demands upon their reverence by taking the meaning of Divinity in a somewhat lower sense. I have never been able to understand it. But what is certain is, that we must interpret an isolated passage in harmony with the general tenor of the book, and not *vice versa*."

Sept. 6.

"It is no difficulty to me that so many people are placed in circumstances for which they are not fitted. I have felt all my life that I was in circumstances for which I was not fitted, and I see that this is necessary. Education would stop if we and our circumstances fitted each other. Failure is no difficulty to me, or rather there can be no failure; for the purpose of God is the training of the spirit, and this cannot fail. All that we are accustomed to value, all that we make an object of, is just mere gymnastics. It is nothing if it does not help forward this. For some the whole period of this life may be rightly taken up with

learning their own evil, their own weakness. It may be necessary through many ages to plumb the depths of our own misery, that we may learn to know what the help of God means. I believe that we shall come to feel that all was worth while, that it is not too much to endure, if it had gone on for thousands of years, to bring us to an eternity of righteousness. Think of it—the love of God! We use those words very often, and get no comfort from them, but think what human love means,—a perfect oneness of sympathy and will with any very near friends, and imagine that purified and intensified to Infinitude! The depth of our misery now is to me a witness of the immensity of the blessing that makes all this worth while."

Sept. 7.

"I look upon Christianity as the revelation of recipiency, of the passive side of the character of God. I can conceive that the first preachers of Christianity understood this very incompletely. Paul—what a noble, heroic figure that is! And yet we see that to him one great idea is the breaking down of the partition-wall between Jew and Gentile. That can no longer be a significant idea for us. There is no partition-wall, there is no caste any longer. Christianity develops itself to us on a different side from what he saw. We want to take hold of this ideal of recipiency. I have sometimes wondered what it is that makes Unitarians so dry and undevotional,—what great difference there can be between one form of belief and another. And I see it is just this, that they have not the element of devotion, which is this recipiency. They stand alone. They leave out the side of God on which He is accessible to us." . . .

"For my part, a miracle presents no difficulty to me; I feel the need of it so much. I feel most literally that there

is no happiness for me that is not miraculous; nothing else would suffice for my happiness but a miracle.

(Speaking of the general notion of eternal punishment,) "I do not think that with holy men of old it was so much the idea of death being an end, as it was that we were all parts of a whole, and that progress was a thing for the *whole*. But I do not look upon it so much as a house that is to be built, as a set of bricks that are to be prepared. It is not a whole at all; it is a set of individuals that are each under special training. . . .

"All religion is in the change from He to Thou. It is a mere abstraction as long as it is He. Only with the Thou we know God."

Sept. 7.

DEAREST * * *,—I go on sending you from day to day what I can remember of the words that I know you so deeply value, and even if you do not find that in this form they convey anything, I shall not regret making the effort, for I find that the attempt to remember these words recalls them to my mind, and, if not the exact words, so much as fills out the meaning of what he has been saying. As you must well know, there is something rather fragmentary and abrupt about his expression, with so many of those little *grunts* interpolated that mean so much when one gets to know him; it is as if the words were all too small, and what meaning overflowed their edge ran into these. I took a delightful drive with him yesterday to the edge of the ferry. It is very pleasant to see his great enjoyment in the face of nature, though he is so blind.

He has been asking about them all. It is rather formidable sometimes when he says "*What* is so and so?" He has great discrimination of character in some ways. He was talking a good deal of Mr. —— yesterday, and said how strange it was that with his great admiration of

Socrates he had nothing of the Socratic dialectic method —that he never went *step* by *step* with any mind,—that he did not give him the idea of ever having been intimate with any one.

LINLATHEN, *Sept.* 10, 1865.

Mr. Erskine's mind seems to have been dwelling much lately on the analogy between the inward and the outward world, he has spoken so much of the force with which the spectacle of a universe regulated by the law of gravitation weighed upon him, as a token of the *one* principle which was to keep the spiritual world in order—that of love. . . . He seems to look upon the force of gravitation as a sort of parable of the influence of love—keeping everything together, keeping everything in movement which does not interfere with any other movement, keeping everything in its right place. Judaism, he said, he regarded as chiefly occupied with the orbit of the planet—Christianity as a revelation of its *centre*. "No human being," he said at one time, "is without lucid intervals in which he would allow that the only good thing in life is love, and that every drop of sweetness comes from this. Christianity is the revelation of the fountain-head of all these scattered drops. It tells us that there is absolutely no other righteousness than love."

The greater part of this was said when we were walking to Broughty-Ferry, and I shall never forget one moment when he stopped to look up into the blue sky through a break in the clouds and said, "What a wonderful thing it is that light should *hide!* There are the stars—why do we not see them? Why do we not see God? He is here." He was of course thinking of Blanco White's sonnet,[1] of which he spoke with great admiration. He spoke some

[1] "Mysterious Night! when our first Parent knew
Thee, from report divine, and heard thy name," etc.

time on this, the unexpectedness of the means by which the stars were hidden from us, the impossibility of our ever guessing that anything was there but blue sky. I think his mind was dwelling on the possible surprise with which it might be that some who had looked earnestly for God and never found Him should see Him *emerge* as it were in some other state. He said distinctly, Atheism might be a misfortune, it might be a stage of education through which some spirits had to pass—that it might be the will of God for a time to hide Himself from them. I had asked Mr. E. how he would look at the mere *records* of Christianity. He said, "Though we must of course approach that narrative just like any other, yet to my feeling Christianity itself has more analogy with natural science than with history. It is a revelation of laws that are independent of facts. There must be a centre of gravity in the moral world, which when once found we shall be right, like the planets, not only as to that centre, but to everything else." He dwelt much upon the analogy of the outward world and the inward world: "The planets move in orderly circles because they have a right centre—we have disorderly motions, because we have a wrong centre. The way to get right is to get into the right place, not to go on trying very hard to be right where we are. It is not that by long trying we acquire the habit of right, and at last it gets easy to us: it is that we see the right way. I feel, 'If I had seen that, I could just as well have done it at first.'" . . .

I asked him what he felt the evidence of a spiritual world. He said, "It is that in us which is unsatisfied with what is necessary for the mere social order. Take the feeling of revenge. It is enough for my neighbour if I refrain from injuring him and perform actions beneficial to him. That satisfies all the conditions of the social order.

But it is not enough for me. Something within me demands a feeling which is, for all outward result, utterly invisible. What is this but a witness that we are inhabitants of a world totally distinct from the mere social order? Think of it—something may be within us which no human eye can see, and yet which we are called upon to renounce. What does this mean? What *could* it mean, if we were inhabitants of a mere human world? Here would be a demand, and no one to make the demand, a summons without a voice. I feel that righteousness implies will, that goodness is nothing if there is not a good *being*. The difference between the teaching of Christ and the teaching of all others—of the wisest and best, of Plato for instance—is, that they spoke of justice, and He spoke of the Just One."

Sept. 13, 1865.

Mr. Erskine spoke of the connection between Matt. vii. 1-5, "Judge not," etc., and the verses which follow, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs," etc.,—and then of the transition which seems in the ordinary acceptation of these later words so abrupt and almost contradictory, but which, as he understands it, is a harmonious development of the same idea. The instrument of judgment is the conscience; we judge ourselves by the conscience, and other men also, and the conscience is "that which is holy" in us; when therefore we pervert this holy thing in us to the service of malice, or of conceit, we are giving that which is holy unto the dogs, we are turning the good in us to the service of the evil in us, we are giving our light for the use of our own evil passions. The conscience is cast thus as pearls before swine, the upper is made to serve the lower, both being in ourselves.

In the same way another text, so often quoted, suffered, he thought, from being severed from what goes before,

"Come unto me," etc. Christ has just explained why He can give us rest, because "no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." "*Therefore*" come unto me and I will reveal Him, and thereby reveal unto you the only rest.

I said that what was perplexing to me in the New Testament was not a passage here and there, but the difficulty I felt in reconciling it with the whole fact of modern civilisation,—that it seemed at times as if this were condemned by the Bible. "Oh no," he said, "there is no condemnation of civilisation in the Bible, only of that in civilisation which is idolatry;" he did not use that word, but I know it was something equivalent to it. "Christianity is *uncompromising*. It says with an infinite patience, but it says quite distinctly, 'There is only one good.' People now want to hear that there are many different sorts of good. I believe quite literally that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. It needs a miracle to keep us from living merely in the world of sense and of intellect, and bring us into that of spirit; to teach us that we are not sent here to assimilate the things about us, but to extract God's meaning from them. I have no belief in the progress of the species. The lesson of God does not seem to me so much to be contained *in* history as to be got at *through* history. It is not that by looking at outward events we shall see any manifestation of the righteousness of God. That is a common view, I know, but I cannot entertain it. Looking at things under that aspect, God often appears to be taking the part of unrighteousness. We must look upon it merely as the school for the training of individual spirits, that to each one individually the message shall come through that which as a whole seems to have no meaning. . . .

"I am much more sure of the being of a Righteous One than I am of the existence of those chairs. If any one should tell me they were a delusion I should not think it likely; I believe they are actual things. But the sense of this demand for righteousness is much nearer the core of my being than the outward world."

Sept. 20, 1865.

Mr. Erskine was speaking of Butler's Analogy, asking me about it, as it was so long since he had read it. He went on to speak of the unreasonableness of those who were offended by difficulties in the Bible which unquestionably existed in the world. "Election," he said, "how unquestionable that is to any one who simply opens his eyes! The unamiable man may bend all his energy to subdue what is wrong, he may never relax the struggle with his unamiable tendencies, and yet with this utmost strain he will do a thousand unpleasant things which an amiable nature avoids without thought or effort. Nothing can be clearer than"—the inequality of advantage was what he meant, but I am not sure of the exact words. "Again, the sins of the fathers being visited on the children. The world teaches us that just as much as the Bible. The mind that finds these things in the Bible inconsistent with the righteousness of God cannot explain them away in the world. There is the same answer for both, that we are not to confound the process of education and its consummation. Whatever is righteous *is*, eternally is—there is no other faith in God but that—but not phenomenally is.

"I know that some people speak of the history of the world as exhibiting the triumph of good. I cannot see it; I see a process, I do not see it completed. The bricks are being fashioned, I do not see the house being built." I asked him if he looked for that ever in this world, and he said "No. We know in the art of healing how large a

part of the process consists in making us apparently worse, how much evil must be turned into suffering before it can be removed. This is what we see going on. We see the evil being made manifest. Yet I believe that those who denounce the Bible as containing things inconsistent with the righteousness of God have sometimes hold of the most important truth, that all His doings must be righteous."

I asked him much about the Bible—what his view was of its standing, as compared with other books. I put together as much as I can what he said at different times in very fragmentary sentences. "I look upon the history of the Jewish nation as presenting a type of the education of an individual soul, in a sense which would not be true of other nations. It is not a perfect type of this education. But yet it approaches it, in a manner which you could not say that Greek or Roman history does." "That is," said I, "that it was not specially the purpose of the Greek or the Roman education to teach those nations to know God?" "Yes, just so. The Jew was taught to recognise a righteous God. He was no better than his neighbours; in many ways he was worse. A Greek David would not, perhaps, have committed his crimes. But he recognised the righteous Being as they did not. How much sin there is in those bequests of David to his son" (the execution of Shimei, etc.), "but yet if we turn to the Psalms this same man acknowledges God, knows God, as the purer moral natures do not. And in the same way the Bible is given to us to help us to know God. We may know the Bible and not God, we may know God and not the Bible, but this is its aim; rightly used, it cannot fail of this."

I went on to ask him if he did not feel that this was specially the time to assert this true character of the Bible against the mistaken idea of its accuracy. I do not feel

very clear of his answer; he seems always so much attracted to the one thought of the righteousness of God and our right attitude as mere recipients of that righteousness, that it seems difficult for him to avert his attention from it enough to think of anything that has no direct connection with it. I said, "Do we not want now to be delivered from an infallible book, as in the time of Luther from an infallible Church?" He said that certainly an infallible book was just the same kind of evil as an infallible Church. But he seemed to think that his one great truth—the recipiency of man as moral rightness—was somewhat imperilled whenever this book was rejected as infallible,—that where men turned away from it, it was sometimes as wanting something of their own.

208. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

LINLATHEN, *5th October* 1865.

BELOVED SNOW,—I thank God that He was pleased to give you any help through your visit to us. I have a perfect assurance that there is always infinite help and comfort in Him, and that all will finally come to know this; but I often feel desponding enough for the details. I hope you will learn, what I am always hoping to learn, to rejoice in God continually, knowing that He is really ordering all your circumstances to the one end of making you a partaker of His own goodness and bringing you within His own sympathy. I thank you for your love; it is most precious to me; and for your offer of service, which I should like to profit by if I knew how, but I am so stupid that I cannot receive help from another, —I need to do things in my own way, and yet I can't do them.

I am glad you are with Mrs. Rich; I should like well

to be of the party. Give her our most affectionate regards. She has not many older friends now, or who love and value her more. My sisters send you their love. If we live a little longer we may perhaps see you again in this world.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

CHAPTER XVII.

Letters of 1865 and 1866.

"ALTHOUGH there are many delightful residences in Scotland, and much delightful society, yet I can recall none which combined the charms of Polloc. There, particularly in his later days, Mr. Erskine was frequently to be found, more especially when, after Lady Matilda's death, Sir John was left in much bodily suffering to fight the battle of life alone, a battle which he fought bravely to the last."[1] And at the last Mr. Erskine was by his side,—the wonderful history given in his letter to Miss Wedgwood (see p. 353, 12th June) being that of his visit to Polloc, and Sir John Maxwell's death, which then occurred. Writing to Bishop Ewing on the funeral day, June 10th, Mr. Erskine says, "This is a great affliction. All who knew Sir John felt he filled a great space in their minds, and will probably feel this more, now that he is removed, than they had thought. I was thankful to have been here so as to have met his love again before he was taken home. But I felt most deeply my own unhelpfulness."

209. TO LADY AUGUSTA STANLEY.

LINLATHEN, *June* 1865.

YOU know already that our excellent friend has been relieved of his heavy burden. . . .

[1] Bishop Ewing's *Present Day Papers*, No. 16, pp. 15, 16.

The conflict was terminated on Monday morning, a little before six o'clock, and the place which he filled in the world is now empty. The place which he filled in the hearts of his friends is not empty, however; his simple upright loyalty of nature will never pass from the memories of those who have known him. He was a brother man, full of affection[1] and full of sympathy for the sorrows and privations of the poor. He deeply felt the responsibility of life, and of all worldly possessions and advantages. It is now eight years since that dear one[2] was taken away. I feel that it is only by abiding in God, in the spiritual realisation of His loving presence and care, that we can rightly receive these events. In that large hand all things are treasured up, and in that eternal purpose all things are carrying forward towards their desired haven. Farewell. —Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

210. TO BISHOP EWING.

LINLATHEN, *June* 20, 1865.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—Beloved Sir John, his face is seldom absent from me, and the thought of the way he would look at things constantly presents itself. I never loved a man so well, from whom I could expect so little sympathy in any of the trains of speculative thought which were peculiarly interesting and occupying to myself. But there was a substance of goodness and nobleness in his character which could both give and receive a deeper sympathy than mere thought could. I had given him a special place in my habitual prayers; so that now the remembrance of him always recurs at the stated times, and sometimes I find I can commit him to the care and loving guidance of our

[1] His nightly habit was to stand at the door after family worship and shake hands with each of the servants as they passed.

[2] Lady Matilda Maxwell, Lady Augusta's elder sister. See p. 332.

Father, just as when he was with us. . . . —Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

211. TO MRS A. J. SCOTT.

LINLATHEN, *6th Nov.* 1865.

DEAR MRS. SCOTT,—I am happy to think of my dear friend—your husband—in that beautiful country, which contains so much that is fitted to tranquillise the heart. I lived once at Veytaux for a few weeks, and the picture of the head of the lake, and of the opposite side, the Meillerie I think they called it, often returns to me as a revelation of mercy and peace from the Creator. I have many cherished recollections connected with that country—of persons and circumstances, which make up a remarkable stratum of my life, to which I can still return with ever fresh interest. I have several such strata quite distinct from each other in their character and composition. One is the Gareloch, with the Row and Roseneath, in which Scott's figure appears; and the walks and talks I had with him return, not as fossil remains, but full of life. No section of my life, however, has been free from sorrow and remorse; and I can only feel reconciled to past memories by the belief that our heavenly Father has had, through the whole history, the purpose of educating my spirit, and teaching me to know Himself, as a friend who was perfectly to be depended on, and who had brought me into being, with a capacity of entering into His purposes, and sympathising with Him in them, and who had been seeking through life to develop that capacity in me,—I mean the capacity of sympathy with Himself. We are just preparing to go in to Edinburgh for the winter. Our summer has been most magnificent. We have had more fine days in it than in any year for the last half century at least.

Dear Mrs. Scott, give my loving regards and affec-

tionate sympathies to your husband. My sister Mrs. Stirling adds her contribution of kind wishes, as Mrs. Paterson would, if she were here, but she is in Edinburgh. —Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

Of a visit paid by him to Mr. Erskine during the following month, Dr. Campbell writes :—

DR. M'LEOD CAMPBELL TO HIS SON.

LAUREL BANK, 28*th December* 1865.

I WENT, I think you know, to Edinburgh in consequence of an invitation from Mrs. Stirling, who thought her brother would be the better of a visit from me; and, in a letter to-day he says he has been; although feeling (as I too feel partly) that we had not made the most of our time—so much was left unsaid. We always breakfasted alone, and sat together for a while after breakfast, till we went up-stairs to have the reading of the Psalms and lessons of the day with Mrs. Stirling. We had had worship with the household before breakfast, Mr. Erskine always praying. (I prayed only on Sunday evening, when I also expounded at considerable length.) We were again alone together at night for a short time. Each day guests to dinner. Our parties were not large, and were easy and pleasant. . . .

My visit was to him, and its deepest interest was that which he gave it. We still do not see eye to eye in some things of deep moment; as to which my comfort was limited to the consciousness that I had been enabled simply to present my objections for his consideration. But in the great thing—the living faith that God is love—I have had, as usual, most quickening sympathy with my friend; and I have also felt that our intercourse, even when regarding what we see differently, was such as necessitated on my part,—as, I trust, on his also,—an inward uplooking in prayer, which raised one into the Invisible and Eternal,

and strengthened, by exercising it, direct faith in the living God. . . .

212. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

11 GREAT STUART ST., 17*th Jan.* 1866.

DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—Enclosed is Mrs. Scott's announcement of her husband's death. To me it appears a merciful release of a wonderful prisoner, whose life for long has been a painful struggle. No man whom I have known has impressed me more than Scott,[1] and I have always received unchanging love from him. Poor Mrs. Scott will feel as if her occupation were gone.

Our life is hid with Christ in God.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

He reckoned you and me his chief friends.

213. TO MRS. A. J. SCOTT.

18*th Jan.* 1866.

BELOVED MRS. SCOTT,—The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? What a wonderful history is man's life! Great gifts given, and then apparently withdrawn, but surely only apparently, for the greatest gift of all remains as a pledge and assurance that nothing good can ever really be withdrawn. Thanks be to God for that unspeakable gift, in whom all others are gathered up.

I look back on my first acquaintance with him—in his youthful beauty—and with that rich endowment of mental

[1] "*Laurel Bank*, 31*st January* 1866.—I was for ten days with dear Mr. Erskine, for which I was very thankful. You did not know our valued friend Scott, of whom Erskine says 'that he impressed him more than any other man had, and of whom I can say the same.'"—(Extract from letter of Dr. M'Leod Campbell to Bishop Ewing; *Memorials*, etc., vol. ii. p. 119, see also vol. i. p. 281.)

power and spiritual understanding. I recall my walks and talks with him by the side of the Gareloch; and the unfailing, loving, and admiring interest which I have ever since felt in himself and in his thoughts and movements. I remember him in that country where you now are, when I introduced him to Vinet and some of my Genevan friends. I remember his father telling me, with such approval and satisfaction, of his engagement to you, and himself taking me to see your brother, Alan Ker. I felt *him* to be a precious gift from God; I felt that he always took God's side in all his intercourse with his fellow-creatures. Dear Mrs. Scott! you know there is a great blessing intended for you in this deep sorrow. May the God of all grace help you to open your mouth wide, that you may lose none of it.

I thank you for writing to me. You will feel that Susie's being with him and with you at this time was a gracious appointment—as well as your dear sisters. After getting your letter I went to my sister, Mrs. Paterson, and Mrs. Erskine; how Jane would have felt it!—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

Mrs. Stirling desires to be remembered to you with her deep sympathy.

GREAT STUART STREET, EDINBURGH.

214. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

11 GREAT STUART ST., 19*th Jan.* 1866.

DEAR MR. CAMPBELL,—Our letters crossed. I know how much you will feel this death, the death of this very remarkable man, interesting to you in so many ways as a faithful, loving friend, as a profound thinker, as a spirit of noble dimensions.[1] When I first met him, he opened him-

[1] For a short notice of Mr. Scott, see Appendix No. IV.

self to me, delighted apparently both to give and to receive confidence and intimacy.

I have found him somewhat changed in that respect, and yet I believe that it was no change of feeling, but a difficulty in his nature, for I have always felt that he gave me one of the first places in his friendship.

As to your own letter. When you speak to me of the love of God, I always feel sure that you mean a love which includes and implies righteousness, and I had hoped that you would interpret me in the same way. In fact I would say that, in contrasting the fatherhood of God with His judgeship, I meant *the first* to represent a righteousness which seeks to communicate itself, and the second a righteousness which seeks to vindicate itself, and I intended to say that the second was put in action, in subserviency to the first.

If you see Dr. Norman M'Leod, I wish you would tell him that I was much gratified by his sending me his address on "The Sabbath." I believe that he is contending for realities against shadows, which is always a good warfare. I have not answered or rather acknowledged it. I would do so if I could do it rightly.—Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

215. TO THE REV. WM. TAIT.

31 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *7th Feb.* 1866.

DEAR OLD FRIEND,—Although I never think of you but as a youth, having before my mind's eye the form in which I knew you thirty-eight years ago, I am sorry for the cause that takes you to Pau, yet I hope that it may be for further good than the restoration of Mrs. Tait's health. When I hear of such a congregation as that which you describe, as given over to your ministrations for some months, I sometimes feel as if I should like to tell them

something myself. It was a curious gospel that Lucretius preached to the Romans of his time, "There are no gods," —*hurrah!* and yet it was a real gospel in his mind. He meant to tell them that in the government of the Universe there was no caprice nor favouritism,—no selfish seeking for honours or sacrifices, no malice nor jealousy to be gratified, no Venus, nor Mars, nor Juno, who ruled the affairs of men for their own private views and piques and interests, and not on any general principle of good,—but fixed eternal laws of justice and righteousness. I have a great sympathy with the old poet, and am sure that he would have welcomed a fuller gospel, if it had been suggested to him, a gospel declaring that not inexorable laws, however just and righteous, but a Being whose righteousness is love, guides and rules the Universe, and that His one unchangeable purpose in creating and sustaining man is to make him a partaker in His own blessedness, by making him a partaker in His own righteousness, and that all the events of life, the infinite variety and complication of joys and sorrows, and duties and relations, in which we find ourselves involved, constitute the education by which He would train and lead us to that great consummation. Whatever happens to us contains this loving purpose in it, and so may be welcomed by us as a manifestation of it, and should be studied by us that we may enter into all its meaning. For until we enter into it, and become fellow-workers with God in working out our own education, we remain unprofited by it. The purpose remains, but remains fruitless, so long as we remain neutrals or resisters of the work. There are few religious phrases that have had such a power of darkening men's minds, as to their true relation to God, as the common phrase that we are here in a state of probation—under trial, as it were. We are not in a state of trial, we are in a process of education, directed by

that eternal purpose of love which brought us into being. It is impossible to have a true confidence in God whilst we feel ourselves in a state of trial; we must necessarily regard Him, not as a Father, but as a Judge, and we must be occupied with the thought how we are to pass our trial. We know our own unworthiness, and though we know that we have a Saviour, there must still be a degree of alarm in the thought of that judgment-seat. But when we have once realised the idea that we are in a process of education, which God will carry on to its fulfilment, however long it may take, we feel that the loving purpose of our Father is ever resting on us, and that the events of life are not appointed as testing us, whether we will choose God's will or our own, but real lessons to train us into making the right choice. If probation is our thought, then forgiveness or receiving a favourable sentence is our object; if education is our thought, then progress in holiness is our object. If I believe myself in a state of education, every event, even death itself, becomes a manifestation of God's eternal purpose; on the probation system, Christ appears as the deliverer from a condemnation; on the education system He appears as the deliverer from sin itself.

My sister Mrs. Paterson often speaks of you, and likes to look back on past scenes—as well as forward. She had enjoyed your tract[1] very much, as also had Mrs. Stirling. I shall be most glad to make your son's acquaintance. Give our affectionate regards to your wife, and receive the same to yourself. Farewell, dear man.—Ever truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

216. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

11 GREAT STUART STREET, 16*th Feb.* 1866.

MY DEAR SNOW,—I am glad that it was you who wrote that article on Scott. I should have welcomed it from any

[1] "The Open Latch."

one, but I am happy that it comes from one whom I know and love as I do you. When I first knew him he was very open and communicative, but he had then less to communicate, and what he had was less complicated, less dependent for its intelligibility on the understanding of many other things related to it. I often wondered at the number and variety of matters in which he evidently took interest, and which he had made himself master of, and yet I always felt that he never lost sight of the relation of each department to the great whole,—the place which it held in the hierarchy of things. I believe that God was a great reality to him. I am happy to think that you have pleasant remembrances of your visit, and hope that you may be inclined to repeat it. There are not many from whom I anticipate the same kind of sympathy that I do from you, and I feel that it is a great reason for thankfulness to find in a younger generation those who may in some measure fill the places that have become vacant.

Well-beloved Snow, may the blessing of God guide and comfort you.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

Give my love to Mrs. Rich, and my best regards to your father and mother.

217. TO MRS. MACHAR.

EDINBURGH, *April* 1866.

THERE are few people now alive whom I have known longer than I have known you, and certainly there are none in whose regard I have more confidence. True love is divine love, coming from God and going to God. I am just now engaged in writing a work which I trust God will enable me to accomplish for the benefit of some of my fellow-creatures. I am exceedingly anxious to get through with it before my eyes fail, which must be soon, as it seems

the cataract is making rapid progress. I therefore grudge the time and eyesight spent on writing other things, and I feel it almost a duty to abstain from work of this kind. Pray God that I may seek God's glory alone, and may be preserved from seeking my own glory. I trust it may please God to scatter those Fenian raiders, and to use them as inducements for men to take refuge under the shadow of His wings. Our country is in a strange state. This Reform Bill seems like the breaking down of barriers so as to allow the inrush of all disorders. We want wisdom to govern us, not numerical majorities. True liberty consists in being delivered from our own vain passions and appetites and selfish will, and it would seem that many now think that liberty consists in the indulgence of these things, and that the restraint of these is slavery. Farewell, the Father's love be your dwelling-place.—Yours, etc., T. ERSKINE.

218. TO THE REV. THOMAS WRIGHT MATHEWS.

GREAT STUART STREET, EDINBURGH, 16*th April* 1866.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—You will be almost angry at my presuming to answer your respectable letter on such a contemptible piece of note-paper as this, but my capacity of writing is now much limited (by cataract in both eyes), and I am anxious, before I am quite blind, to finish an essay which I have now under my hand, and which I hope may by God's blessing be helpful to some of my fellow-creatures. This makes me brief in letter-writing. I believe that the fact of Carlyle being my guest whilst he was in Edinburgh for the purpose of being installed Lord Rector of the University was the chief reason of my being honoured with the LL.D. degree. Of course nobody calls me Dr., except for fun. Well, we are in the land of living men, amidst very wonderful things. Assuredly the light is advancing,

and I believe there are now more men in the country really devoted to the cause of truth, practically, than there have been at any former period, but the disorder is very great. Men forget that they are branches and not trees, and so the fruit is not of the right kind—wild grapes, . . .

T. ERSKINE.

MR. CARLYLE TO MR. ERSKINE.

SCOTSBRIG, ECCLEFECHAN, 17*th April* 1866.

DEAR MR. ERSKINE,—This is almost the first day I have had any composure; and I cannot but write you a little word of gratitude, to Mrs. Stirling and you, for your cordial reception of me in my late shipwrecked state, and your unwearied patience with me, during the whole of the late adventure. Now that it is all comfortably over, and a thing to look thankfully back upon, there is no feature of it prettier to me than that your kind chamber in the wall should have been my safe lodging-place (three "chambers" or almost four, as Cairns well knows!), and that there, with the very clock silenced for me, I should have been so affectionately sheltered.[1] Thanks for this, as for the crown of a long series of kindnesses, precious to remember for the rest of my days.

I intend home, probably Monday next—from Dumfries, my penult and one remaining shift. I sprained my ankle a week ago, but it is mending;—and otherwise the scene altogether is touching, tender, and mournfully beautiful to me. I wrote a little word to Lady Ruthven, as you suggested. I am still deepish in Notes, and ought to be in the woods of Springkell on my solitary rides of meditation rather.

With many grateful regards to Madam and yourself, I remain always yours sincerely, T. CARLYLE.

[1] See page 535.

219. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

LINLATHEN, BROUGHTY-FERRY, 19*th Sept.* 1866.

BELOVED SNOW,—I hope you are persuaded of my deep sense of the filial services which you have rendered me, and of my devoted love to you. I miss you much, for myself and also for others. Mr. Campbell is now with us. I should have liked well that you had met him—he has such pleasure in communicating himself, and weighing all difficulties and suggestions. I never saw a man so liberal whose spirit is so solemnised. You rarely meet with these two qualities in combination.

We have had Jowett also, who is of a different type, but very good, being full of knowledge and political fervour, and thoroughly imbued with Plato.—Ever most affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

The day after this letter was written, Mr. Campbell himself writes :—

TO BISHOP EWING.

LINLATHEN, 20*th Sept.* 1866.

. . . SINCE I came here I have been referring to my little book, *Christ the Bread of Life*, in conversation with Mr. Erskine, and am glad to find that his impression of its clearness and fulness agrees with my own. So I hope that in now re-reading it with the benefit of all your recent thought on the subject of transubstantiation you may find it satisfying. . . .

It is now the 24th, and I am finishing my letter after my return to Parkhill. I am thankful for another visit to Linlathen. I meet in no one the same full realisation of the gift of God as Eternal Life—the Life of Christ to be our life—that I see in Mr. Erskine; and this is a bond of the most sacred kind. . . .

220. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

LINLATHEN, *5th November* 1866.

WELL-BELOVED GOVERNESS,—I am most grateful to you for your enduring love, which is to me of great price.

I rejoice in Maurice's appointment, thinking him the fittest man in the kingdom for the special chair, and moreover thinking that the infusion of his character into the thoughts of the young Cambridge men would be and will be an invaluable element in their education. He is a Felix Holt divinised, in one portion of his being, and how many portions has he, untouched by Felix? In comparing him to Felix, I mean merely to say that he is prepared to carry out all his convictions without any cowardly hesitations. As Erasmus described the difference between himself and Luther, when some flattering friend was giving him the first place, by saying, I can write, but Luther can burn. Maurice can do both.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Letters on Select Subjects.

I.—PLYMOUTHISM.

221. TO MRS. BURNETT.

CADDER, 17*th March* 1840.

. . . WHAT you say about the Plymouth Church interests me very much. I have not seen much of them, but I have heard a good deal about them, and have known some of them. I am inclined to think them very confined, and too exclusive. They convert spiritual principles into formal rules, which seems to me a canker in the root of Christianity. Thus we read, "Love not the world, nor the things of the world;" this is a spiritual principle, which ought to be received into our hearts, so that God's judgment and favour, and not man's, in all things is to be considered and sought after under the influence of this principle. If I am really conscious to myself of a desire to do God's will, I may conform myself to every human decency, and to everything that is of good report, and even to every form or custom which is in itself indifferent and not sinful, and in doing this I am Christ's freeman, living not under a letter, but under a spiritual law. But when I interpret this "Love not the world" into a prohibition to conform to certain customs of dress or housekeeping or behaviour, I am turning the spirit into a letter, and although in my own particular case I may still be in the spirit and free,

yet in the case of others, who adopt my sentiments, the probability is that my judgment may in this matter weigh a good deal with them, and when we have formed a society on these views the general opinion of the society will in a great measure bind the consciences of the individual members, so that in truth the society comes between them and God, and thus becomes a "world" to them, as hurtful in its degree to their spiritual condition before God as the outer world can be.

I should also be disposed to think that the Plymouth Brethren do not form to themselves a large enough idea of human nature in its right state, and of the education which befits it. Thus, I could suppose that they would not like their children to read Shakespeare. I don't know this for a fact, but my idea of them suggests this supposition. Now, I think it is of immense importance to see that every movement towards the extension of man's capacities and faculties is in itself good, and may and ought to be made by the person who makes it, and to be studied by the person who studies it, to the Lord. There is nothing unholy in philosophy, or poetry, or knowledge, or art, or taste whatever in themselves, but only in prosecuting them in a selfish, independent, ungodly spirit. Christ has redeemed the whole humanity, the whole capacities and faculties of man, so that all our doings should be holy, whether we sing, or paint, or whatever we do. Religion should be a sap flowing through the branches of man's life, consecrating the whole of the products. Life is not divided into religious and secular parts; all should be religious, because it is a spirit and not a mere letter which God has bestowed on us in Christ. The world is a temple, or ought to be, and the business of life ought to be the services of a temple. Perhaps I have multiplied words here to excess, but I see much bondage produced by ignorance of this. When I read Plato or Shakespeare

in a spirit entirely different from that in which I allow myself to read the Bible, I am wrong. The testimony which the Plymouth Brethren bear against the conformity of the Church to the world, and against Christians spending their money as worldly people do, I entirely approve, and sympathise with in principle and spirit. The individual amongst them whom I knew best was and is painfully to me Calvinistic in his view of doctrines, limiting the love of God, etc. I don't know whether this is universal amongst them.

With regard to the extracts from Law, I don't much wonder at what you say, and yet I cannot help thinking that your objection is more against words than realities. You disapprove of saying of an unconverted man that "Christ is in him," or that "the Holy Spirit is in him." You say that such expressions are unscriptural, and give false ideas. But consider a moment Law's meaning. He means to say that a man who refuses to believe the truth of God, or to submit to the authority of God, is culpable in so doing. Now, why or how is he culpable? Simply because he might do otherwise. If he could not do otherwise we might pity him, but we could not blame him. The man is capable then of apprehending the truth and the authority of God. But how is he capable? Spiritual things can only be discerned by the Spirit. If the Spirit of God is not within his reach, so that he may make use of it in the apprehension of divine truth, he is incapable of apprehending it, and therefore cannot easily be considered responsible for not doing it. I am thus led to conclude that the Spirit is in such a way and sense present in every man, that the man, if he will yield himself up to its instruction, giving up his own self-wisdom, may so use it as to apprehend the things of God by it. And I believe further that the Spirit is there for that very end, and it is pressing itself on the attention and acceptance of every man, and that the man's continu-

ance in darkness and sin is in fact nothing else than a continued resistance to the Holy Spirit. It is in this sense that I understand the words of God to Noah, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," etc., and Stephen's words to the Jews, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." It is in the same sense also that I understand the whole book of Proverbs, "Wisdom crying to the sons of men;" "The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord," etc. In this same sense also I understand Jesus standing at the door and knocking. Now, is it within a man or without a man that the Spirit strives with him? Where can he resist the Spirit of God but in his own heart? It appears to me that the difference between an unregenerate and a regenerate man is mainly this, that the first is resisting the Spirit of God which is striving with him, and the second is yielding himself up to be led by it. It is in him in a very different sense from what it was before—it has got into his will. I become a spiritual man by receiving the Spirit into my will, but I could not do that unless the Spirit had been there for me to receive it. It had been in me before, though not received into my will, the place which it seeks, the throne of my being, and my sin had consisted in shutting my will against its urgent knockings. Suppose the race of man to be one great tree (like a genealogical tree) with the roots, Adam and Christ. From each root a sap ascends and visits every branch and twig of the tree; the branches have the power of choosing which sap they will admit and which they will shut out. The old sap is in possession to begin with, but the heavenly sap presents itself at the door, and asks admittance, and has a witness within each branch that it ought to be admitted, and by its presence there confers a power on the branch of accepting its aid in expelling the old sap and giving itself

up to the new. Now, the Spirit of God is also the Spirit of Christ, and Christ is the channel through which all good things come to us. So that Law does not feel as if he were much wrong in calling the Spirit by the name of Christ, especially since it is it that is in us, in order that Christ may be born and formed in us in the higher sense, namely, by getting possession of the will. I am not anxious to make proselytes to phrases; but to the real presence of the Spirit of God in every man, striving with him for his good, and grieved when He is resisted, I do wish to make proselytes, believing it to be to the glory of God and to contain a loud call and a great hope for man. I believe that Law, when he calls on men to look inward, means merely to warn them of the necessity of applying to the Spirit, and of the impossibility of knowing anything about God but by the Spirit. He does not mean to refer them to any human faculty, far less to any frames or feelings of their own.—Your affectionate cousin, T. ERSKINE.

II.—PUSEYISM.

222. TO AN UNKNOWN CORRESPONDENT.

LINLATHEN, 30*th Jan.* 1841.

As you are now fairly settled at the fountainhead of Puseyism, and brought much into contact with persons and circumstances that may recommend it both to your imagination and understanding, I have thought that I might be acting the part of a friend towards you, by writing to you some thoughts on the subject, which might at least serve the purpose of making you weigh the matter well before you give your acquiescence to it.

You must yourself have felt that the first problem to be

solved in the formation of a sound system in politics, in morals, or in religion, is to reconcile the full and vigorous development of the individual man with that reverence for the authority of others which becomes him as a member of society. The right of private judgment, the refusal to receive simply on authority any principles or rules which affect our higher interest as moral, spiritual, immortal beings, the demand for personal satisfaction, the consciousness of a personal responsibility, which are the elements of individual development, and without which it cannot exist to any considerable degree, seem often to be, even by their right use as well as by their abuse, the occasion of the greatest confusions and disruptions of public order and tranquillity. And no doubt they are much exposed to abuse, that is, to be exercised without the control of principle, the honest purpose of doing what is right,—and being thus abused, they tend really to injure the character of the individual, as well as to hurt society. The thought of this may well make us hesitate about allowing too much scope to the individual independent judgment, as tending to strengthen the selfish independency of the will. We know also that submission to a rightful authority, as in the case of children for example, is most favourable to the growth of the character, intellectual as well as moral, up to a certain point at least. We see thus that there are two things good for man, but that it is difficult to have them both. Must we forego one of them? and if so which of them are we to forego?

But it may be said, we need not really forego any good thing, for has it not been admitted that submission to a rightful authority is, at least in the case of children—and if in their case, why not in all cases?—more nourishing to the whole character than any independent, ungoverned movements of the individual will. But here another question

comes in, What is a rightful authority? When I come myself to feel the difference between right and wrong, ought I to regard any authority as rightful which commands me to act in contradiction to what I feel to be right? Does not this very consciousness of knowing what is right lift me out, as far as those things are concerned in which I discern a positive right, from under any other authority than the Fountain of right—than God? Does not this consciousness impel me, and strengthen me, in the face of all human judgment, to appeal to a greater than they? and ought I not to consider this voice within me as claiming me to be under his own particular authority? more especially if I come from some obscure consciousness within me to the belief that, although I have only on these few remarkable occasions heard the voice, yet it is in truth always speaking in me and assuming a direction of me on the most minute as well as on the greatest occasions? What right have I then to give myself up implicitly to another director? If God is really speaking to me, I can have a right to submit to another authority only when it accords or perhaps does not discord with His authority in my conscience. Besides, it is surely true that God puts me whilst a child under my parents, only whilst my conscience is growing, with the purpose of teaching me the habit of looking upward for direction and strength, and not with the purpose that I should never look higher. Surely all inferior authorities are appointed to train us to the knowledge of the Supreme authority, and not to supplant it. But the habit of taking the opinion or judgment of a man or of a Church as a sufficient ground for conduct after we have passed childhood and have arrived at the period when we ought ourselves to hold communion with God, must tend very much to keep conscience asleep, or in a very low condition.

My conscience witnesses to me, as a child, that I should obey my parents. Well, how far should this obedience go? Surely not the length of making me do what I see distinctly to be wrong. "Children, obey your parents, in the Lord,"—that is, I suppose, as far as you see their command to be in accord with the Lord's will. Authority is good and useful when it is used for bringing us into a condition in which we may ourselves see what we ought to do, without other direction. It is a part of the education of conscience. A child's education consists mainly in choosing between the authority of its parent and its own inclination, but the education of men consists much in choosing between the authority of God and the authority of man. It will not stand us in stead to say, My father is God's ordinance to me, therefore I may obey him in anything without fear of going wrong.

The use of submission to authority seems to me chiefly to lie in this, that by it I am delivered from self-will, and so put into a condition of judging rightly, although that judgment may be in opposition to the authority to which I submit myself. Jesus said, I know that my judgment is true, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. When I cease to seek mine own will I am in a condition to form a just judgment, and the habit of obedience helps us to that cessation. The parent is an ordinance, the pastor is an ordinance, the church is an ordinance, but personal spiritual communion with God, holiness and righteousness, are not ordinances, but the things for which ordinances are appointed. The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. It is not enough that I see the ordinance to be of God's appointment: I must see also that that which comes to me through it is of His will.

I must not take it for granted that because the ordinance

is of God's Divine appointment all that comes to me through it is also divine. Here then I must exercise private judgment; I must judge my ordinance, my pastor, my parent, etc.; I must do it whether I will or not, if I do not consent to have altogether a second-hand religion. I think Puseyism is wrong, in the way which I have now described, in the view which it takes of authority and ordinances. I think that its root is the same with that of Popery, only it has not gone so far. Quakerism is its supplement, its opposite pole—necessary to complete it. It denies the light which lighteth every man, and thus it is forced to set up authority in its place. But when submission to authority is thus set up in the place of conscience it becomes itself, not a means but an end—not an assistance to education, but the condition aimed at in all education, and thus righteousness is really annihilated, or at least contracted into mere obedience. And how, without an original light, can I judge of the rightness or wrongness of an authority? Am I to take the authority that comes first? How do the pastors know it? have they an inward light, and they only? The author of the review of Carlyle in the *Quarterly* evidently thinks that men ought to have been content to have remained in the lowest state of degradation rather than to have taken the initiative of reformation out of the hands of the Church into their own. This is really denying the cup to the laity,—the wine, the blood, the life,—and condemning them to be merely a passive substance to be animated by the clergy, the living part.

It appears to me that Puseyism as well as Irvingism is a return to Judaism; an outside thing instead of an inside thing. I am well aware that we cannot have a religion so altogether spiritual as to be independent of outward forms, but I think that Christianity aims at the highest degree of spirituality, and that this is the explanation why the New

Testament writers are so sparing in their directions as to forms of any kind. They wish to implant principles which may lead to their own results. They put down the centres of circles, but they draw no circumferences. I believe that one form is good for one time, and that another is good for another. When I read Matthew and John, and compare them together, I cannot but recognise two very different intellectual forms at least of the same religion. I am persuaded that those who go into Puseyism are either led by the poetry of it—and there is much poetry in it,—or by that desire to get rid of doubt and responsibility, and of the necessity of personal judgment and of a personal exercise of conscience, which has led many before into Catholicism.

If we wish to be perfect men in Christ Jesus we must consent to bear our own responsibility—and does not the apostle say, "Every man must bear his own burden"? referring, as it appears to me, to this very subject.

T. E.

III.—THE FORENSIC THEORY OF JUSTIFICATION.

223. TO THE REV. PATON J. GLOAG, D.D.

March 1858.

REV. SIR,—I have looked through your works on Justification by Faith, and on the Assurance of Salvation,[1] and I venture to communicate to you some of the thoughts which they have suggested to me, persuaded that you will receive them candidly and kindly, not rejecting them unweighed because they do not altogether agree with what you have been accustomed to consider the orthodox standard. I observe, from what you say in the beginning of the 184th

[1] These works, written by Dr. Gloag, now minister of Galashiels, had been brought under Mr. Erskine's notice by a common friend.

page of the larger work, that you have felt the difficulty connected with the common theory, although you have got over it. You have felt the difficulty of believing that there could be anything conventional or arbitrary in God's dealings with man, in the spiritual education of him. Every thinking man must have felt it; and many, I am sure, have been compelled to reject the common theory, whether they have arrived at any other which satisfied them or not. Let me propose a solution. Does not the true rightness of man consist in an absolute submissive dependence on God as a loving Father, who is continually, by His Spirit within and His providence without, seeking to bring us into an entire conformity with His own will? Does it not consist in such a dependence as the branch has on the vine, living by the sap thence received? Does not man's wrongness consist in his following his own independent will, in acting from his own resources, in living under the power of self? Faith, confidence, dependence, is the name for man's turning from himself to God. "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths." This faith is man's right condition, and it is the righteousness of Christ, as the sap in the branch is the sap from the vine. When I entirely trust in another, so as to surrender myself to his guidance, the righteousness of that other is communicated to me. This is, I believe, the δικαιοσύνη which is by faith, the righteousness of faith. There is a δικαιοσύνη which is on all men whether they believe it or not, the manifestation of the loving purpose of God toward them in Jesus Christ, but which does not become δικαιοσύνη, righteousness, until it is received by faith, the spiritual apprehension.

I believe that the Son of God, the eternal Word, is the original foundation and ground of man's being; that man

is in the image of God because created in Him who is the express image of the Father; that man's acting as if he were his own or had anything of his own, and not as existing in Christ, is his fall and unrighteousness; but that does not and cannot get him off the deep original ground of his being. I believe that as Christ is the ground of man's being, and is actually in every man as the supplier of spiritual life, so He is also the Head of man, of the whole race of man, acting for the race, not at all as their substitute, but as their Head and root; doing things, not instead of them, but for them, as the root does things for the branches.

I have no belief in the forensic theory, which seems to me founded on a mistaken conception of God's relation to man. It supposes that God's chief relation to man is that of a judge, and that the relations of Father and teacher must suit themselves to it, in subordination to it; whereas I am convinced that it is just the contrary. The forensic system supposes that God made men that He may afterwards judge them; I believe that He judges them that He may teach them, so that His judgments are instructions. I believe that God created man that He might instruct him into a conformity with His own character, and so make him a partner of His own life, the eternal life which is His will or character. This view of the purpose of God in man's creation makes an important change in our feelings with regard to the Law. Whilst I regard God as my Judge the law is an object of fear, and the higher its standard the greater is that fear; whereas if I regard God as my Fatherly teacher, seeking to make me a partaker in His blessedness by making me partaker in His holiness, I am delighted with the contemplation of the high standard to which He is using means to elevate me, and instead of shunning this searching eye, I desire to expose myself to it,

knowing that it is the eye not of a taskmaster who is seeking occasion against me, but the eye of a loving, spiritual physician who is searching into my disease in order to cure it. The 139th Psalm is a beautiful exemplification of the effect of this apprehension of God and His purpose towards us. David, conscious of much sin and pollution, welcomes the gaze of God, assured that His object is to lead him in th way everlasting. When I am sure that God's one and sole purpose towards me is to deliver me from everything that can separate me from Himself and His eternal blessedness, I can lay myself down with absolute security in His hand, receiving His discipline in whatever form it comes, saying, "Search me, O Lord, and know my heart; try me and know my ways, and lead me in the way everlasting."

I believe that this state of spiritual being is the true justification by faith and the true assurance of salvation, and that these can never be produced by any feeling that we have complied with any condition, either faith or obedience (which, in fact, come to the same thing), but that they can only be produced by seeing in the character of God that thorough fatherliness on which we can place a perfect reliance, and by discovering that His purpose for us is just what we most desire for ourselves. I find it most sweet when I can thus rest on the eternal love of my Father's heart, sweeter far than to rest on any thought (most dubious at best) that I have fulfilled a prescribed condition of either faith or obedience, and sweeter also than to rest on the idea of a legal transaction by which my debt to God has been paid. I wish to owe Him all, to owe Him a debt of love which never can be paid. If I believed in the forensic theory I should feel that in coming to it from the 139th Psalm I had come from a higher, holier ground to a lower and less holy, which I am sure is impossible in the progress of divine revelation.

Jesus is the Revealer of the Father, and His doings have their chief value in discovering to us the everlasting Fountain out of which they flowed. It seems to me that at every step of His earthly course we should hear Him saying, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;" and what were all these steps but a varied manifestation of the desire to seek and to save the lost? What were they but varied expressions of sympathy for man pressed down by sin and sorrow? So the miraculous cures are less considered by the evangelists as acts of power than as acts of compassion, tokens of sympathy (Matt. viii. 17). And thus He revealed the Father. And in that touching invitation which concludes the 11th chapter of the same book the true meaning of the whole passage is missed unless we see its connection with the last clause of the 27th verse, "Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him;" and now come unto me, for I am the Son ready to reveal the Father, and so to give you rest.

But I must stop, for I shall be writing you a book and not a letter if I go on. One thing, however, I should be sorry to omit, which is, that the forensic theory has a direct tendency to make men think that salvation consists in the removal of a penalty instead of a deliverance from sin. I am persuaded that it has had that effect on the minds of our population very universally.

And now, dear sir, hoping and trusting that you will interpret kindly both what I have written and my purpose in writing, I subscribe myself your obedient servant,

T. ERSKINE.

P.S.—When I use the phrase "forensic theory," I mean that theory of the work of Christ which contains the idea that God is compelled by His own essential justice to

punish sin, and to punish it as an infinite offence because it is committed against His own infinite excellence, and that in order to evade this necessity, which would involve the perdition of the whole race, He has had recourse to substitutional imputation. It seems to me that there is a mistake at the very foundation of all this. I do not believe that justice ever is, or can be, satisfied with punishment. I believe that the justice of God is the righteousness of God, and that His righteousness requires righteousness in man, and can be satisfied with nothing else, and that punishment is God's protest that He is not satisfied. But it is evident that if this be so the judicial office is incomplete in itself, and must be subordinate to the teaching office, so that the condemnation of wrong may minister to the inculcation and acquisition of right.

I can see many causes for the marked unfruitfulness of religious instruction amongst us, but I am persuaded that the chief are that the judicial character of God is made to swallow up and conceal His paternal character; that thus Christ is viewed as a refuge from the Father instead of the way to Him, and that the Law is represented as a standard by which we are to be tried and condemned, instead of a standard to which it is the purpose of God to raise and draw us up. I believe that the true assurance of salvation is unattainable where such thoughts exist and prevail. Finally, I believe that we are all called and elected to eternal life, but that we may frustrate the counsel of God, and that therefore we are exhorted to make our calling and election sure, not to make ourselves sure that we are called and elected, but to make our undoubted calling and election *βεβαίαν*, firm, solid, as Æschines said of the democracy. The democracy existed, but it might be made sure, or it might be sapped by the factious oligarchy.

Farewell, dear sir; I trust you will not think me either presumptuous or officious in thus writing to you.

T. ERSKINE.

IV.—THE BIBLE.

Among Mr. Erskine's papers was the copy of this letter addressed by him to Bishop Colenso, without a date :—

224. TO BISHOP COLENSO.

MY DEAR LORD,—I could not satisfy my own conscience if I did not make some acknowledgment of your kindness in sending me your remarks on the Bishop of Cape Town's proceedings in relation to you.

Of course I agree entirely with you in your view of the legality of the Metropolitan's claims, and not only as to what the law actually is, but what in reason and righteousness it ought to be.

But further, I agree with you on a much more important matter, namely, the meaning and purpose of authority in all true teaching. I am sure that so long as we believe anything that is of the nature of a principle merely on outward authority, be it the authority either of God or man, without discerning for ourselves its own truth, we are not truly believing it. We may be believing the veracity and the wisdom of our informer, but we are not believing in the truth of the thing he made known to us, until we discern that truth. If I am to be saved or spiritually healed by a truth, I must have my spirit brought into contact with the quality and character and reality of that truth, so as to be affected by it in accordance with its proper nature,—and any faith which is not fitted to do this is not that which I need.

The object of all true teaching is to make us independent of authority; and to reduce all belief into submissive obedience is as great a blunder in religion as it is in common sense. I cannot become loving or pure or humble by mere obedience. I must perceive the excellency of love and purity and humility. I believe that the most strenuous advocate for authority would admit, that if the Bible and the Koran were put at the same time into any one's hands, and he were called on to make choice between the two religions, he ought to be able to see that the Bible contained more and higher truth than the other. And if it is granted that man ought to judge rightly in such a case, it must also be granted that he has the capacity of discerning truth in spiritual things, which capacity it is the purpose of all religious teaching to cultivate.

The value of the Bible, according to my reason and conscience, consists in what it contains,—in the truth which I find in it,—not in the manner in which it was composed. I cannot fully estimate what it has been to myself or to my race. From the history of human thought I see that there has been hardly any true apprehension of the nature and character of God, or of our relation to Him, out of the pale of its influence. That this light should have been enjoyed by that small tribe, and that it should have been continued amongst them through a succession of teachers, whilst even Greece and Rome were comparatively dark until enlightened through them, seems to suggest that there must have been the interposition of a supernatural agency. But I believe this on account of the truth which I find. I do not believe in the truth on account of the supernatural agency; and yet after having been constrained to recognise that supernatural agency, I feel that I am not justified in reading the Bible as if I had made no such discovery. It will still remain true that I cannot believe till I discern

truth, but I shall read with a reverent thought that though I do not yet see it, there is truth there, if I could see it.

From your quotation in page 14, I gather that you look on the Bible very much as I do; and as you doubtless acknowledge that all education must begin with some form of authority, you will also feel the importance of avoiding everything which is likely to shake the confidence of those multitudes who, you know, will never advance beyond authority all their lives. Whether you have actually and in your writings been sufficiently careful here, is the point on which many whose views on the nature and use of authority in all teaching, and especially in religious teaching, are the same as your own, yet differ from you. You seem to me to think that those who agree with you on this subject of authority, and also acknowledge that there must be very considerable truth in the critical conclusions as to the history and composition of the Old Testament books at which you have arrived, ought also consistently to approve of your publications on these books. But you may be mistaken. If all the religious teachers of this country, or even a large proportion of them, did really in their teaching address the conscience and reason of their people, so that the people were accustomed to this kind of thought, I do not believe that your books could have excited any alarm; but you know well that this is not the case, and that conventional notions on religion are the common notions of the country, and that, generally speaking, Christianity itself is identified with, and is supposed to stand on nothing else than, the belief of the verbal inspiration of the Bible. This wrong state of things ought certainly to be corrected as speedily as possible. But by what means? By denouncing the error, or by guiding the people into the truth? It is a difficult question, because it must be a question of degree.

I feel that I shrink from what you have done, and yet I can conceive your acting perfectly conscientiously. When I think of your criticisms I often seem to hear the voice of the Great Teacher saying, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," as a call to thoughtful tenderness for our brethren. I sometimes also consider whether you are prepared yourself for the results of such criticisms on the New Testament.—I remain, my dear Lord, with best wishes, yours faithfully, T. ERSKINE.

I do not feel myself justified in saying anything by merely knowing that it is true; I feel bound to look to its probable effects on those who hear it.

225. TO PROFESSOR LORIMER.

HOTEL, GRANTON, 14*th July* 1858.

DEAR SIR,—It was with no small interest that I read over those sheets.[1] It seems to me most important to understand the place which the Scriptures really occupy, that so we may make the use of them which they were intended to serve, and be delivered from any superstitious feelings about them. This is specially needed here in Scotland, where a belief in the Bible is often substituted for faith in God, and a man is considered religious, not because he walks with God in his spirit, but because he acknowledges and maintains the verbal inspiration of the sacred canon. I have seen people brought up in this way who would have felt their whole faith in spiritual things annihilated by the discovery of any contradiction or inaccuracy in the Gospel history. A faith of this kind, which rests on ignorance and which is dispelled by knowledge, is certainly not the kind of faith which we should desire either for ourselves or others. The most lamentable

[1] Some sheets of a volume on the "Inspiration of the Scriptures," by Dr. John Muir, who endowed the Sanscrit Chair in the University of Edinburgh—transmitted to Mr. Erskine, to obtain his opinion of it.

infidelity cannot fail to be the result of it. I agree also with the author of these sheets, that it is desirable that laymen should take up the study of the Scriptures, as they may be expected to be less fettered by prejudice than those who have been brought up within the limits of articles and confessions of faith.

I feel all this, but there is another principle which is perhaps liable to be forgotten amidst such thoughts, and it is this, that no man can successfully study spiritual truth except in a spirit of reverence. If a man approaches the New Testament as he might approach a new book on geology or botany he will certainly fail to understand it. Solomon has well said, "The scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not." His mind in a self-conceited or even a careless state (I mean morally careless) cannot comprehend wisdom. All spiritual truth is addressed to the conscience in man, and is only understood by the conscience; and if the conscience is not in action the truth is to him like light grasped by the hand instead of received by the eye. A grammarian or logician, in the exercise of his function, is apt to overlook this, and to forget that there may be meanings in the words or reasonings which he is handling that require the co-operation of another faculty.

I believe that ninety-nine out of a hundred of the religious people of Scotland believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and would have their faith shaken to pieces by the facts which your friend adduces in those sheets. I should like to see them disabused, but I should like this to be done in a way that would transfer their faith from the letter to the spirit, and not destroy their faith altogether.

I believe that all spiritual truth is of inspiration, and that it is apprehended (as I said before) by that in man which is of the nature of inspiration. Unless there were "a true light lightening every man that cometh into the

world," God would never speak or have spoken to man, for He would not have been understood. I cannot draw a distinct line between Inspiration in the Bible and Inspiration out of the Bible, but I am sure that all that God speaks to us through others or from without is intended to make us better apprehend what He is speaking to each of us in the secret of our own being.

At the same time I ought to say that I find thoughts and words both in the Old Testament and in the New, which reach my inmost soul with a conviction and a power that I find in no other thoughts or words.

I think that the great fault of our common preaching consists in the almost entire want of reference to that inward light in man. "Christ in you the hope of glory" is the gospel which Paul preached to the Colossians (ch. i. 27), and the outward Christ could not have been our Saviour unless He had been also within.

I have been long of sending this, but I have thought it right to send it that I may mark where I conceive your friend to be quite safe, and where I think he ought to be on his guard. This is all very desultory.—I remain, dear sir, yours truly, T. ERSKINE.

Mr. Erskine's letter having been sent to Dr. Muir, he wrote expressing a strong desire that Mr. Erskine would give to the world his views on the subjects handled in his pamphlet. To this Mr. Erskine replied :—

226. TO PROFESSOR LORIMER.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, *5th Aug.* 1858.

DEAR SIR,—I return your friend's letter, wishing much I could do what he suggests in it. I believe that a true explanation of what Christianity means is the only evidence on which it can be received. No miracles of whatever kind could make a man who felt in his conscience that he was

called to be good, loving, righteous, believe that God was not good, nor loving, nor righteous; his difficulty is to reconcile this character of God with the facts around him —I may add, with facts within him. The idea of judgment comes in and bewilders him. He sees sin and misery around him; he is conscious of sin and misery within himself, and God becomes to his conception a Judge and not a Father. With such a conception it is impossible that he can make any progress in moral or spiritual life. If I suppose that God is simply pronouncing judgment on me through the voice of conscience, and not educating me, I can have no confidence in Him, and without confidence in Him I am powerless for any good. I must have confidence in Him, but it must be, not a confidence in His laxity or indulgence, but, a confidence in His purpose to make me and all men LIKE HIMSELF. This is the confidence that I must have in God if I am not to fear Him, or hate Him, or despise Him. With this confidence I can trust myself on the immeasurable ocean of being; without it I must either live without thought, or a prey to continual fear, or a devil occupied with my own appetites and passions. Wherever I find such a character of God I acknowledge a true religion. It meets my conscience, it meets my reason, it is the crowning fulfilment of that order which is presented to me in the relations of life. According to this light, the laws of the spiritual world are unchangeable; an unloving, unrighteous, impure, selfish being must be miserable. God's mercy never dreams of relaxing this law, but His constant and eternal and finally triumphant action is to draw man out of that evil condition into His own goodness. If I can gather this character of God out of the Bible, I feel that I owe an immense debt to it, or rather to Him who by His providence has thus supplied the need of my soul. Of one revelation I am perfectly sure, and that is the revelation of God's light in my conscience. And yet, as I have just said,

I find that I am often puzzled by it, and that I draw wrong inferences from it. I feel myself delivered from my difficulties and helped to give the true interpretation to the indications of the light within me by this view of the character and purpose of God which the Bible, and especially the New Testament, opens up to me. And so I acknowledge it as a revelation also. The only revelation from without which I can acknowledge is some light which will give its full and satisfactory interpretation to that revelation within, which I already have. I believe also that a man may be almost insensible to the light within him, and may yet find that light stirring itself under the action of a true light from without which awakens him to a consciousness of its being there.

This character of God as a teaching Father who eternally desires and seeks the holiness of His reasonable creatures seems to me the great revelation of the Bible, and the true meaning of Christianity. I am prepared to hear any criticisms on the book; they do not trouble me in the least. I have found a medicine which heals me; I have found an omnipotent Friend, whom I may, by following selfish desires, shut out from my spiritual sight, but from whom I can never separate myself—a friend who is the eternal enemy, and will be the eternal conqueror, of all evil, and who will neither spare Himself nor us any suffering which may be necessary to this result. This is the pearl of great price which when a man has found he needs not that any other should tell him its value, he knows it and feels it; he does not need any evidence that this revelation of the character of God is a true revelation, he knows it must be true, or his own existence, his own consciousness, is a lie.

If any textual emendations or any improved translation could bring this truth into clearer light, I should welcome them with my whole heart. Even without this unspeakable

advantage I welcome them; but I have often been disappointed by finding that men who were zealous for the critical processes were comparatively cold to this, without which these processes are mere matters of philology. Now if I were to attempt a crusade it would be for this truth, and not for the philology, because I should like to concentrate the thoughts and hearts of men upon it.

Now, my dear sir, I have to repeat of this what I said of another of my letters, that it is all very desultory, but I think there is a truth in it which will commend itself to some consciences.—Yours truly, T. ERSKINE.

227. TO BISHOP EWING.[1]

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *February* 8, 1861.

No man can long more for an agreement between our Christianity and our conscience and spiritual reason than I do, but I do not think this is to be effected by such works as the *Essays and Reviews*.

It is not by such criticisms that man can be helped to read and understand the Bible. This is the eighth day of the month, and I have been reading the Psalms and lessons for the day, and I find in all the portions of Scripture, so widely separated from each other in point of time, and in the circumstances of the writers, the breathing of the Holy Spirit, so revealing to man, as no other voice ever did, his true condition before God, and drawing him up out of that horrible pit, with an apprehension of his Heavenly Father's unchangeable purpose of holy love towards him, and help-

[1] This letter was written immediately before a visit paid by the Bishop to Mr. Erskine, of which he writes:—"I have just come from being ten days with Mr. Erskine in Edinburgh. It is always a great gain to be with him. I learn more from his conversations than from all the books I read. His looks and life of love are better than a thousand homilies."—*Memoir of Bishop Ewing*, p. 311.

For other and most valuable letters to Bishop Ewing besides those quoted in this volume, see *Present Day Papers*, Third Series.

ing him to rise into fellowship with the heart, where that purpose ever lives, as an everlasting ground of hope and consolation, that after reading these words I have felt that when some gentlemen of cultivated faculties combined their efforts to enlighten their countrymen in the nature and structure of that book (so that it might be studied with intelligence and profit), a very different result was to have been expected from that which they have actually accomplished.

Every one who has read the Bible with real earnestness, must have felt that its chief object was to help man to know God, and to know themselves in His light, and so be led to receive His Spirit, and to become temples of the Holy Ghost. Surely then, if we find this chief object ignored and unnoticed in dissertations written to elucidate the character of the book, we must at least admit that by this omission a very grave mistake has been committed. I am reading them over, so that I may not form my own judgment on quotations picked out by those who have assailed them in the periodical press.

I have finished the first, and find nothing to condemn in it; but it, I suppose, is the most innocent of the seven, with perhaps the exception of the last, whose author is, I know, a thorough believer in subjective Christianity at least, and is an earnest man. In fact it is more what they have left unsaid than what they have said that I grieve for; although I feel that a miraculous previous history, such as that of the Jews, according to the Old Testament record, is required as the preparation for the appearance of Jesus Christ. It is required also as the explanation of the difference between the religious knowledge of the Jews and that of all other nations. Does not a miraculous dispensation seem the reasonable and necessary concomitant of that wonderful light shining in the midst of gross dark-

ness? God thus taught the people, that they were not to be the slaves of matter, but to be the free children of Him who governs all things. The miracles of the Bible are not marvels, but illustrations of the character of God, and prophecy is the continual witnessing that in God alone is the redemption of man, and that the redemption is to be accomplished by the way of sorrow and suffering and death.—Very truly yours, T. ERSKINE.

228. TO MISS GOURLAY.

127 GEORGE STREET, 14*th Aug.* 1869.

MY DEAR MISS GOURLAY,—Miss Wedgwood is very good and diligent. She reads Ewald to me, the history of Israel divested of miracle, and as a nation choosing God, not chosen by God. Such a choice continuing during such a length of time, in the midst of surrounding idolatry, seems to me more incredible than any miracle. But it is a very ingenious and very gravely written book.[1]

V.—SELF-SACRIFICE—THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

229. TO BISHOP EWING.

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *January* 9, 1861.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—Don't you yourself feel that the sacrifice of Christ was truly the sacrifice of self at the very root of the humanity? It is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews that "He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

Sin consists in self-seeking; and sin can therefore be put away by no other means than the sacrifice of self—a

[1] See also "The Bible in relation to Faith," being the fourth chapter in *The Spiritual Order*.

sacrifice, however, which must be reproduced in every soul of man before he is individually delivered from sin.

Christ's sacrifice cannot be unlike anything else in the world—it is the very type of what must be done by the spirit of Christ in every human being.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

230. TO BISHOP EWING.

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *January* 15, 1861.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—What is the meaning of the words of our Lord, "Not my will, but thine be done"? and those others, "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of my Father"? Jesus Christ was truly a man, and truly tempted, although He always resisted temptation, and, therefore, had that in Him which could be tempted. He came into humanity, and went through the education of humanity, laying down self at each step. He would not have been a real man, if He had not had that self in Him which would seek its own. And He was our Saviour by continually sacrificing that self, and by presenting Himself continually to His Father in every thought and word and deed—a perfectly loving and obedient Son. His sacrifice was the work of His whole life, and this sacrifice is the basis and the soul of all true worship of God in man. . . .

231. TO THE SAME.

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *February* 1861.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—I have, of course, read Mr. Maurice's book on Sacrifice, and I felt there, as in all his writings and speakings on the subject, the presence of that element of which he feels the absence both in Mr. Campbell and in me. It is not, however, absent from my mind, only I feel a great difficulty in forming anything like a

clear idea of it. It is the redemption of humanity by its purgation in its root—the God-man, through His death and resurrection. I have been always accustomed chiefly to contemplate this in its reproduction, in the spirits of men, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, when it becomes part of our own personal conscious history. I have always felt Mr. Maurice's language on this subject less clear than I could wish. I find this both in his book on Sacrifice, and in the remarks which he makes on Campbell's book in the introduction to his Epistle of St. John. I believe that Christ's work on earth could not have been a mere manifestation of the loving purpose of the Father, but must have accomplished something, and that was the purgation of which I have spoken above. . . . —Very truly yours, T. ERSKINE.

VI.—EDUCATION—NOT PROBATION.

232. TO THE SAME.

LINLATHEN, *August* 17, 1864.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,— . . . It is as clear as day that, however true a truth may be, it can never have its full legitimate influence over me and value to me, until I discern the truthfulness of it; but I require to be gradually educated into the discernment of its truthfulness; and authority is an indispensable element in this education. A child must begin in its knowledge of numbers by believing on the authority of its teacher that twice two is four, yet no one even supposes that the child has really learned the truth on this matter until it is in a condition to reject any authority that would try to give it the idea that twice two was five. Even so in religious truth we must begin with authority: the child is to be educated

into the discernment of truth, and we know that in regard to much in this department of thought, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand remain children to the end of their lives. At the same time, the object of the true teacher will always be to help the child (whether he be young or old) to discern the truthfulness of the truth, and this is to be done by helping it from a lower step to a higher, by letting it perceive the connection between them, just as a child, after it has perceived that twice two is four, may be helped to see that twice four is eight. Thus a child may soon understand that God wishes it to be good, if it has the good fortune to have a father or mother who it feels wishes it to be good, and when it has got the knowledge in this way, it has hold of the truth, not on authority, but really. In the same way it may learn that God's purpose in punishing it is to make it good, and that the meaning of God's goodness in relation to it is that He will use the fittest treatment (whether pain or pleasure) to make it good. It may then go on to learn that real trust in God means a confidence that His purpose in all that He does is to make it good. It is quite evident that the duty of faith in God might be taught as a dogma resting on the authority of Catechism or Scripture for a hundred years without the slightest good, because the old child has never discerned the truthfulness of the truth. Now, as I believe that all the dogmas of Revelation are connected with that primal truth, their truthfulness must be discerned in the light of that truth before they can do the work they are intended for. The true teaching of Christianity is helping men to see that the work of Christ is simply the declaration of and carrying out of this primal truth, that God's purpose is to make men good. For my own part, I feel that I believe the Bible because of the things that I find in it,

rather than that I believe them because they are in the Bible.

I believe that if it were generally adopted as a fundamental truth that man was created not to be tried but to be educated, it would help to clear the way both of teachers and of learners very much. The idea that we are in a state of trial or probation necessarily forces us to look on God as a Judge, and forces us also to be more occupied with the forgiveness of sins than with a deliverance from sinfulness. It is this idea which has given its character of substitution to the life and death of Christ, representing it as the ground on which God is justified in forgiving men, rather than as the actings of the root of the human tree, by which the sap is prepared for and propelled into the branches. It seems to me also that it is this idea which has made eternal punishment to be received as a principle in God's government. If it were believed that God had created us for education, and that not one in a thousand had really received any education, it would generally be accepted without hesitation that the education must necessarily proceed in the next world. . . .

I hope the Great Physician's treatment may be profitable both for your soul and body.—Yours very truly,

T. ERSKINE.

233. TO BISHOP EWING.

LINLATHEN, *August* 24, 1865.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—Your question about God doing evil that good may come—doing an evil moreover which we distinctly see, to produce an assumed good which we do not see—is one which has probably at times darkened most minds. The answer which my mind makes to itself is, that the spiritual education of individuals, and not

the outward ordering of society, is God's great object. Righteous causes in the world are often overborne by unrighteous power, and yet the man who suffers for the defeated righteous cause completely justifies God in his own heart, giving Him credit for a purpose of training which he finds realised in his own experience. The Mahometan ship arriving after the king's prayer that the ship of the true faith should come first belongs to the same class of things. Is not the way of the Lord unequal? Whenever a man lives in this world as if it *were all*, the way of the Lord must appear unequal. What a monstrous thing in appearance it seems that I should come into existence with a predisposition to malice and envy, and pride and sensuality; and then that I should, in the ordering of my lot, have every opportunity afforded me of gratifying these evil inclinations. Nothing but that life is an education, can give a meaning of righteousness to this fact.

It seems to me that God's eternal, unchangeable, and unalterable purpose of making all men righteous, combined with His perfect wisdom and knowledge, is the only explanation of the wholesale slaughter of Canaanites and Perizzites, etc. If a surgeon knows to a certainty that he can cure a man of cancer or frightful neuralgia by putting a knife through the part, he would be wrong not to do it. It is a great help to apprehend the immense difference between a man becoming good by choice and being made good whether he will or not, and the necessarily great superiority of the one goodness over the other, and hence to infer the righteousness of all means used to produce the former. God does me no injustice whatever misery He may subject me to, if He is by it leading me to this. The smallest unnecessary suffering I protest against; but any suffering which is needed to press me into eternal life, eternal

righteousness, I accept with my whole reason and choice, however much I may shrink from it whilst it is upon me. One is apt to forget that the small annoyances of life constitute parts of this process. If I can remove them I consider myself entitled to do so, but I am wrong if I do this with no other thought than to get rid of a burthen. There is a supernatural element in all my circumstances which is nothing less or lower than the will of God, and I ought to handle it reverently.

I should much like to have a few days with you, but I fear I ought not to venture so far from home. I shall be seventy-seven in October—very near the conclusion certainly! It is a wonderful thought the passing through the veil.—Yours most truly, T. ERSKINE.

234. TO BISHOP EWING.

LINLATHEN, *September* 16, 1865.

MY DEAR BISHOP,— . . . I am not searching into the origin of evil. I merely say that, as a spiritual being is only good by choosing to be good, it needs to be educated into this choice of goodness, and cannot be *made* good in the truest and highest sense. Those who suppose that this goodness could be created or made, can never understand the spectacle of this world. They think that God might have saved an enormous amount of sin and misery by creating men permanently good at once. I do not feel that I am beating my head against an insoluble difficulty when I maintain that the goodness which God desires to see in men is a goodness which in the nature of things can only result from a process of educational exercise. I believe that every human being is intended to occupy a particular place in the great organised body of the humanity of which Christ is the Head, and that a

suitable course of education will be applied to each one, through all the stages of his existence, until he is made fit to fill this place.

And when I further see that the great object of God in this education is to make man sensible that he requires God in everything, that he can do nothing rightly without God, then I can understand, that there may be a real progress in this education, even by all the down-breakings which men make in life. I see that faith and recipiency are one thing. The righteousness of faith is God received into man's will. as his only possible portion and refuge—"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done." But a *belief* in the inextinguishable loving purpose of God is necessary as the basis of this *faith.*

I am thankful to be able in my own mind, in my own reason, to justify the ways of God to man. I am thankful to be able to give God glory in all His dealings with myself and my race. . . .

I would say to ——, "I don't deny that there is a trial and probation throughout man's whole life—but the trial is subservient to the education: he is tried that he may be educated, he is not educated that he may be tried." And to —— I would say, "Men are always under this purpose of education, and this purpose implies forgiveness of past sins; and thus they are under the forgiveness of God, whether they know it or not." He interprets this into an affirmation, on your part, that men were saved whether they knew it or not; but the above was and is your meaning, no doubt.

I would say that faith means a perfect assurance that what ought to be, will be,—that God will certainly do that which is right, and that right is the best thing that can be done for me, and for every one else. A man who believes that right could ever possibly do him harm has no true faith.

The man who believes that right must always do him good, has got hold of the secret of truth and peace—for he will also believe that God must always do right. This is the text of the prophecy of Habakkuk—one of the most precious books of the Bible—in my estimation. It is the eternal blessed reality of that technical conventionality in the English Constitution, that the king can do no wrong. The real King, the eternal King, can do no wrong. He must do right, and right is the universal good—for you, for me, and all—for bad and good.

I should like now and then to have a word with you. The living voice is better than the touch of a pen; but these things are true, whether spoken or unspoken. They are rays of that eternal light, of which it is said, "Thy sun shall no more go down, for the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."—Ever truly yours, T. ERSKINE.

VII.—THE TRUE CHARACTER OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

235. TO THE REV. G. D. BOYLE.[1]

EDINBURGH, 19*th May* 1864.

DEAR SIR,—It may seem strange to you that I do not remember whether I answered your letter to me of last November, but I don't like to run the risk of not answering it, and would rather answer it twice. I conceive that great confusion often arises from misconceptions as to the

[1] "I never saw Mr. Erskine, but he was so well known to many friends of mine that, on the suggestion of my friend the Rev. F. D. Maurice, I wrote to him, and had this letter in reply."—(Extract from letter of the Rev. G. D. Boyle, Summerhill, Kidderminster.)

meaning of righteousness in God. It is generally interpreted to mean the conscientious and scrupulous fairness of a judge who gives sentence according to a law which he is appointed to administer, and which has no other end than to protect innocence and to punish crime. Now the righteousness of God must be very different from this; His righteousness desires to communicate itself, its object is to make men righteous. If you saw a father punishing his child, and you asked him what he intended by it, if he were to answer, I do it because the fellow deserves it; if you then were to ask him what effect he expected to produce on his son's character by it, and he were to reply, I don't think of that, I satisfy myself with knowing that he deserves it,—would you not say at once to him, You seem to me to have renounced both the duties and the privileges of a father; you are neither a righteous father nor a righteous man; God made you a father that you might help Him in His purpose to make your child a good man, and you have ignored this high calling entirely. The true righteousness endeavours to make righteous; it can never cease to do so; when it does cease, it ceases to be righteousness. Now is it not evident that this true righteousness necessarily implies and contains forgiveness in its very nature? It punishes with the purpose of blessing, not for punishing's sake. The gift of Christ is just the manifestation of this righteous purpose of God. The love which gave the gift contains and implies forgiveness. Now, if this is just a repetition of something which I have already written, you will excuse it, remembering that I am nearer eighty than seventy. I don't write with the expectation of an answer, but if you choose to write, which will be always gratifying to me, the safest address in present circumstances (of flitting) is the New Club, Princes Street.—I remain, dear Sir, yours truly,

T. ERSKINE.

VIII.—SUDDEN CONVERSIONS.

236. TO MRS. BATTEN.

LINLATHEN, 17*th August* 1859.

DEAR MRS. BATTEN,—The information contained in your own letter, and in Mr. Brendon's, and the other, about the conversions taking place in your neighbourhood and elsewhere, is very remarkable and very interesting.

I do not pretend to judge them. I am sure the Lord desires the conversion of all, and that His Spirit is striving with all, whether they yield to the sacred influence or resist it.

A conversion, that is to say a true conversion, implies a knowledge of God, and of the relation in which we stand to Him in His Son. It implies a knowledge of God as a holy, loving Father, who desires for us that we should be partakers of His own holiness and His own blessedness. But a man may be awakened without being converted; he may discern that it is a fearful thing to be opposed to the God who holds him and all things in His hands. He may discern that the words which he has been in the habit of using about God and sin are the representatives of tremendous realities, but until he knows that this God is his own loving Father, he can never turn to Him truly. I would say that God lives by and in His own Will, that Will is the eternal life of God, and when a created spirit receives God's Will into its will, it becomes partaker of the eternal life. This I conceive is salvation; I don't understand any other meaning of salvation. This is what I believe man was made for; his danger, his temptation, is self-will,—making himself his centre. This is sin, that which separates a man from God and his fellow-creatures.

Jesus came to save men from sin, from this sin, which

is the root and summing-up of all sin. This then is the salvation of Christ: I don't believe that He came to deliver men from any penalty. I believe that every penalty which God has inflicted on men has been for good, so that deliverance from it would be an evil. I cannot see any distinction between salvation and the conformity of the will to God.

I agree with Mr. Brendon that I should expect more lasting results from a silent conversion than from a more excited one, still it is the actual turning to God which is the important matter.

In this country we are all brought up from childhood with the great words of Christianity sounding in our ears, but they have no meaning to us until we hear them in the spirit.

This discovery of the truth does not make God our Father. He always was and is so; He is the Father of the prodigal whilst eating the husks with the swine, but until he knows His Father's love he shuts out the eternal life, because he cannot trust his Father. He cannot open his will to let in and embrace his Father's Will, for that seems to threaten him with destruction; but when he discovers that that Will seeks only to deliver him from the disorder and confusion and misery which his blinded self-seeking has produced, then he can and will say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." He now sees that what God desires for him is the very thing which he desires for himself, but which he can only get through a participation in God's Spirit, and through yielding himself to all God's training.

"Open Thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of Thy law." God is my Father, Christ is my head, and the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son is breathing into my conscience.

This is all true, whether I believe it or not. My faith cannot make it, but until I know Him whose voice it is, until I know whence that voice cometh, and whither it would lead me, I am not, and cannot be, born of it; for this is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent; and the birth of the spirit, the birth from above, is just to receive the eternal life, to receive the will of God, instead of the will of the flesh, or self-will.

One man may teach another words, but he cannot even give him thought, much less can he give him a realising apprehension of the realities of the unseen world.

I think that there is a great deal of wisdom in Mr. Brendon's observation, that in the case of these sudden conversions there is always the danger of the person trusting in the conversion, instead of trusting in God. In fact there is a continual temptation to escape difficulties by substituting a sham for a reality. I may have eternal life for ten minutes, but I must abide in it by a sustained faith in God and by the continual action of my will, if I would keep the blessing. I must fight the good fight of faith, not merely to get hold of eternal life, but to keep hold of it, and to make progress in it.

Man was created perfect, that is, merely without the wrong bias; and he was placed where he was that he might learn the superiority of God's Will to his own, and practically to acknowledge that superiority. He had the self-will in him which he was to keep in subjection to the will of God. This he could only do by continual trust and continual watchfulness, but he seems to have forgotten that he was placed there to learn to fight, and thought only of enjoying, and thus the first temptation overcame him. And are we to think ourselves secure because we have tasted of the love of God?

I don't believe that a man is or can ever be stereotyped either in good or evil. To suppose that God is good by necessity and not by His own will would be to degrade Him; and it must be the same with the creatures made in His image. Moral good always implies choice, so man can neither be made good nor upheld in good by a mere act of power. And yet neither conversion nor perseverance in good is man's own act. They are the voluntary yieldings of man to the actings of God. We are the branches of the Vine, whether we receive the sap or not; our will cannot make the sap, or be a substitute for it. The voice of conscience is the effort of the sap to enter into the branch; that effort gives us the power to receive. Man is made to be a continual receiver, and in order to this he must be in a continual state of trustful dependence. We are to be fellow-workers with God, I suppose and believe, for ever.

I believe that the baptism of an infant means simply to declare God's fatherly love and relation to the child, and His purpose to educate it for Himself,—this I believe to be true of every child born into this world. Baptism declares the truth, it does not make it. The child must afterwards learn to yield its will.

I believe also that the forgiveness to be preached through Christ is the same thing which is declared in baptism.

It is not withdrawing any penalty, it is the declaration of God's fatherly love and relationship to every human being, and His unchanged and unchangeable purpose to train him into conformity with the Divine Will, which will be carried forward on the other side of the grave as well as on this.—I am, etc., T. ERSKINE.

IX.—ETERNITY OF LIFE—OF PUNISHMENT—OF EVIL.

237. TO MADAME FOREL.

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, EDINBURGH,
24th April 1862.

. . . I BELIEVE as you do, that eternity has nothing to do with duration. I think eternal means essential in opposition to phenomenal. So eternal life is God's own life; it is essential life; and eternal punishment is the misery belonging to the nature of sin, and not coming from outward causes. A man who receives the will of God into his inner being is taking hold of eternal life, for God's life is in His will, or perhaps His will is His life, and thus a participation in His will is a participation in His life. Que ton royaume (*règne*) vienne, que ta volonté soit faite. This is salvation, —when a man uses his individual will merely as the recipient of God's will. All the planets have their separate individual centres of gravitation, but then only there is order, when these are kept in subordination to the sun as the common centre. Salvation is true order in the moral world. It means a deliverance from disorder, not a deliverance from punishment, for punishment is desirable when it corrects disorder. Give my affectionate regards to Madame Vinet . . . and believe me, very truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

238. TO BISHOP EWING.

3 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *February* 1, 1864.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—The question of the eternity of evil has a difficulty in it beyond what appears at first. If we suppose eternal creation, we can scarcely escape from the eternity of evil. I believe that there is a continual con-

test, and a successful contest, of good and God against evil: but I believe also that whilst the creation of moral agents with free wills continues, the evolution of evil from these free wills will take place. Thus the eternal existence of evil is a quite distinct idea from the permitted permanency of evil.

What your Charge I suppose meant to suggest was, that God always must contend, and contend successfully, against evil, and never consents to its permanency. The eternity of evil, if true, does not arise from the permanency of evil, but from ever new creation of free-will agents, who in their progress evolve evil.—I remain, yours always,

T. ERSKINE.

239. TO AN UNKNOWN CORRESPONDENT.

FAITH in God, trust in the righteous God, the Almighty Maker and Ruler of all things, contains within it the assurance that good must overcome evil universally. But what is the victory of Good over Evil? Is it the destruction and annihilation of all evil beings? No, that is not the victory of good over evil, but the victory of strength over weakness. The victory of good over evil is the conversion of all evil beings into good beings; it is the making darkness light and crooked things straight.

I am saved from pantheism by the consciousness that I can and do resist God, and also that I can and do yield myself to Him.

X.—FINAL SALVATION OF ALL.

240. TO MR. CRAIG.[1]

DEAR SIR,—Your epistle on the "Final Salvation of

[1] Author of "Final Salvation," etc.

All Men from Sin" has been put into my hands by a friend, who knew that the principles contained in it are those with which I have long concurred and sympathised: and having read it, I cannot help reaching out to you a brotherly hand, and saying, God speed you!

The title of your pamphlet has been, I think, well chosen. It is not a deliverance from punishment, but a deliverance from sin, that you desire or expect. All punishment appointed by God, whether it be the natural result of sin, or any superadded chastisement, is intended by Him "for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness;" so that a deliverance from punishment, instead of being a thing to be desired, would, in fact, be equivalent to the deliverance of a sick man from the necessary and wise prescription of a skilful physician. This is the revealed purpose of punishment,—a purpose agreeing with the character of God, and with the relation in which He stands to men. He is the "righteous Father"—"the Father of the spirits of all flesh," "who willeth not the death of a sinner; but that all should come to repentance." Let us hold fast the purpose of God in all punishment, and remember that as it is the purpose of Him who changeth not, but who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, it cannot be a purpose confined to any one stage of our being, but must extend over all the stages, and the whole duration of our being. It is surely most unreasonable to suppose that God should change His manner of dealing with us, as soon as we quit this world, and that if we have resisted, up to that moment, His gracious endeavours to teach us righteousness, He should at once abandon the purpose for which He created us and redeemed us, and give us up to the everlasting bondage of sin. Do we not feel that such a supposition is too horrible—that it is most dishonouring to Him who has said, "I will never leave

thee, nor forsake thee," and, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee"?

This reasoning agrees with the argument presented to us in the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where the Apostle, in setting forth the fulness of the redemption by Christ, declares that the benefit through Him is, in extent, parallel to the evil introduced by Adam; that is, that as the evil affects all without exception, so the blessing embraces all without exception. Let any one read the 12th and 18th verses of that chapter, as if in juxtaposition, which they really are by construction, and he will find himself constrained to admit that this and nothing less could have been the meaning of the writer. Indeed, through the whole chapter there is a preponderating advantage thrown into the scale of the redemption, to the effect that not only were the evils of the fall met by the salvation of Christ, but that the gain far surpassed the loss, so that it is really contrary to sound criticism to hold, that in that most marked and most remarkable passage, where the comparative results of the fall and the restoration are expressly considered, any ground is allowed or given for a doubt as to the final salvation of the whole human race. The 11th chapter of that Epistle is pervaded by the same doctrine, being a declaration that God's election does not affect the truth and certainty of the final salvation of men, but relates to the temporary use which He makes of individuals or nations to accomplish the ends of His government. I know well, that most people in this country feel that all such arguments and expositions are met and overturned by the solemn words of our Lord in the 25th chapter of St.

Matthew, and by other passages of a like import. I feel, on the contrary, that the passages which I have quoted from the Epistle to the Romans ought really to be considered as the ruling passages on the question, and that those from St. Matthew, and others of the same class, should be explained by them, and in accordance with them, because in them the fall and the restoration are expressly compared with each other, in their whole results, and the entire superiority claimed for the restoration in amount of benefit, and entire equality in point of extent; all which would seem to me to be utterly nullified by the fact of a single human spirit being abandoned and consigned to a permanent state of sin and misery. I therefore understand that awful scene represented in St. Matthew, as declaring the certainty of the connection between sin and misery, but not as a finality. I do not believe that *αἰώνιος*, the Greek word rendered "eternal" and "everlasting" by our translators, really has that meaning. I believe that it refers to man's essential or spiritual state, and not to time, either finite or infinite. Eternal life is living in the love of God; eternal death is living in self; so that a man may be in eternal life or in eternal death for ten minutes, as he changes from the one state to the other.

There is no lack of arguments for the general view which I have taken of this subject, drawn either from conscience or the Scriptures, or both. There is one which cannot but have great weight with all who fairly consider it. Throughout even the Old Testament, God is more constantly presented to us as a Father than in any other character; and in the New, our Lord speaks of it as the chief purpose of His appearance in this world, to reveal His Father, as the Father of the whole human race. In both, frequent appeals are made to our sense of the love and desires and obligations of an earthly parent towards

his children, in order to impress on us the nature of the relation in which God stands to each one of us; and very frequently these appeals are accompanied with the assurance that the love of the human parent is but a faint reflection of the love of the Heavenly Father. What can be more touching than the appeal in the prophet Isaiah? "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee." The parallel passage in the New Testament is this: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give!" But we all feel that the first and ever-during duty of a father is to endeavour to make his child righteous. A righteous father must always do this. The moment he ceases to do this, he ceases to be a righteous father. However the son transgresses, we never feel that the father's obligation to try to bring him back can be dissolved. And the righteous father's heart goes along with his obligation; he could not give up his son although the whole world agreed that he had done all that could be done for him, and that it was useless to try any more. And shall we not reason confidently that the righteous Heavenly Father will do exceeding abundantly above all that the righteous earthly father can either desire or effect? But does this desire for the righteousness of his child, in the heart of the earthly father, terminate with the child's life? Although he is only the father of his body, does he not yearn after the soul of his son, who has been, perhaps, cut off suddenly in the midst of sin and thoughtlessness? He does indeed yearn after his soul, and carries it on his heart a heavy burden, mourning all his life long, and wavering between hope and fear as to what his everlasting lot may be. The righteous earthly father, being only the father of the child's body, feels thus

and acts thus; and can we suppose that the Father of the spirits of all flesh will throw off His care for the souls of His children when they leave this world, because they have, during their stay here, resisted His efforts to make them righteous? The supposition seems monstrous and incredible, and in truth could not be acquiesced in by any human being, were it not for certain false ideas concerning the justice or righteousness of God.

I believe that love and righteousness and justice in God mean exactly the same thing, namely, a desire to bring His whole moral creation into a participation of His own character and His own blessedness. He has made us capable of this, and He will not cease from using the best means for accomplishing it in us all. When I think of God making a creature of such capacities, it seems to me almost blasphemous to suppose that He will throw it from Him into everlasting darkness, because it has resisted His gracious purposes towards it for the natural period of human life. No; He who waited so long for the formation of a piece of old red sandstone will surely wait with much long-suffering for the perfecting of a human spirit.

I have found myself helped in taking hold of this hope by understanding that God really made man that He might educate Him, not that He might try him. If we suppose man to be merely on his trial here, we more readily adopt the idea of a final judgment coming after the day of trial is over. But if we suppose man to be created, not to be tried, but to be educated, we cannot believe that the education is to terminate with this life, considering that there is so large a proportion of the human race who die in infancy, and that of those who survive that period there are so many who can scarcely be said to receive any education at all, and that so few—not one in a million—appear to benefit by their education.

That, as there are great judgment days in this world, so there will be great judgment days in the other world, I have no doubt; but I believe that they are all subservient to the grand purpose of spiritual education. We are judged in order to be thereby educated; we are not educated that we may be judged. I believe that each individual human being has been created to fill a particular place in the great body of Jesus Christ, and that a special education is needed to fit each one for his place. Whilst we are ignorant of the destined place of each, it must of course be impossible for us to understand the wonderful variety of treatment, through which the great Teacher is conducting all by a right way to the right end. But He knows and does what is best and wisest; and may there not be a necessity in some cases for treatment which can only be had on the other side of the grave? And shall we in our short-sightedness consider Him debarred from any such treatment?

I cannot believe that any human being can be beyond the reach of God's grace and the sanctifying power of His Spirit. And if all are within His reach, is it possible to suppose that He will allow any to remain unsanctified? Is not the love revealed in Jesus Christ a love unlimited, unbounded, which will not leave undone anything which love could desire? It was surely nothing else than the complete and universal triumph of that love which Paul was contemplating when he cried out, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. xi. 33.)

Let me conclude now by saying that I am persuaded that this doctrine which you advocate is the only sufficient ground for an entire confidence in God, which shall, at the same time, be a righteous confidence. According to it, God created man that he might be a partaker in His own

holiness, as the only right and blessed state possible for him. If I truly apprehend this—if I truly apprehend that righteousness and blessedness are one and the same thing, and just the very thing I most need—I shall rejoice to know that God desires my righteousness; and if I further know that He will never cease to desire it and to insist upon it, and that all His dealings with me are for this one end, then I can have an entire confidence in Him, as desiring for me the very thing I desire for myself. I shall feel that I am perfectly safe in His hand, that I could not be so safe in any other hand; for that, as He desires the best thing for me, so He alone knows and can use the best means of accomplishing it in me. Thus I can actually adopt the sentiment of the Psalmist, and say, "Thou art my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort. Thou hast given commandment to save me, for Thou art my rock and fortress." And I can adopt these words without any feeling of self-trust, because my confidence has no back look to myself, but rests simply on God. The greatest sinner upon earth might at once adopt those words, if he only saw that righteousness was his true and only possible blessedness, and that God would never cease desiring this righteousness for him. I am fully persuaded that the real meaning of believing in Jesus Christ is believing in this eternal purpose of God, the purpose of making us living members of the body of His Son. And as this blessed faith helps me to love God and trust Him for myself, so it helps me to love my fellow-creatures, because it assures me that, however debased and unloveable they may be at present, yet the time is coming when they shall all be living members of Christ's body, partakers in the holiness and beauty and blessedness of their Lord.—I remain, dear sir, Yours truly,

T. ERSKINE.

241. TO BISHOP EWING.

KEIR, *June* 18, 1864.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—You know that I believe that the Bible was given to us, not to be cited as a peremptory authority in anything, but to help us to understand the character of God, and the relation in which we stand to Him; so that I should regard it as a misuse of it were I to allow any particular passages in it to outweigh the general instruction which it contains on these points, and yet I can say that those passages which give the most direct utterance on the subject of the final destiny of man seem to me to be most unequivocal declarations of universal deliverance. . . .

But now to leave the general instruction which the Bible gives as to the character of God, and to go to particular passages referring to the final destination of man, let me ask you to re-read the 5th and 11th chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. It seems to me impossible to read those two chapters without the conviction that St. Paul, at least, was fully persuaded that all men should finally be saved. In the 5th he contrasts the loss of Adam with the gain of Christ, and whilst he puts them exactly on a par in point of extent, he claims a superabundance of blessedness for the latter over the condemnation of the former. Nothing can be clearer than this. But proceed now to the 11th chapter. The apostle begins by saying that it would not be fair to say that God had cast away His people, because it was evident and undenied that some were not cast away; but still he acknowledged that though there was an election that had obtained what they sought for, yet the nation, as a nation, had failed to obtain it; nay more, that they were blinded, and under a judicial sentence of spiritual slumber and blindness, and deafness,

as it is written in the 7th verse, "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." So here we have the election satisfactorily disposed of; and we are invited to follow the apostle in what he sees of the future history of the rest who were blinded. This future history he takes up at the 11th verse. "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid! impossible, but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy." Now read the 12th verse, and the 15th and 16th verses; then go on to the 25th and 26th verses; and so to the end of the chapter; and then say whether in your conscience you can believe that St. Paul did not intend to teach the final salvation of all men; for it must be of all men if it is of all the Israelites; and to suppose that such a word as this could really have an honest fulfilment, by the conversion and salvation of some distant future generation of Jews, whilst all the intermediate generations were left to perish, appears to me gross trifling with the character of God. Strange as it appears, I have found very few people who have read the 11th chapter with real attention. With —— I feel the question to be more and more essential every day.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

242. TO THE REV. JOHN YOUNG.

1866.

MY DEAR SIR,—My hope for the final salvation of all men rests, in the first place, on the ground in which I know you believe as I do, namely, *the desire of God that all men should be righteous;* in the second place, on the assurance that God sees the end from the beginning, and will never bring into existence any spirits which He foresees will

finally resist His desire. But further, I may perhaps appear to you to think too lightly of sin; but I cannot help thinking that there may be a teaching through sin, an instruction in righteousness through sin, which perhaps could not be given in any other way. The conviction of the rightness and blessedness of a perfect trust in God may be more efficiently taught through the conviction of the sin and misery of self-trust and self-seeking than through simple spiritual apprehension. May not Peter have learned from his sin in denying his Lord a lesson of self-distrust and trust in God which the words of Jesus could not have given him? God foresaw the whole results which would follow the creation of creatures endowed with free-will, and with these all before Him, *He took the step.* He saw the enormous amount of sin and misery that would be produced, yet He proceeded in the work. I trust in His trust, in His love, and in His wisdom. . . .

When I think of having actually resisted the righteous will of God to gratify my own selfish will, it appears so monstrous that though God declares that He forgives me, I cannot forgive myself, I cannot look at it without horror; but if I come to feel that through the deep contrition arising from this transgression and the assurance of a love which proceeds in its endeavours to train me in righteousness, undamped by all this iniquity, my heart has been really brought to trust in God more and to die to self more, then I become reconciled to myself; I can think of my sin, not with less but more hatred of it, yet with less horror of myself. I can look forward to eternity without the idea of the hideous memory making existence painful. I have gained by sin. I have gained righteousness through means of it. If this is possible I don't think God would prevent sin even if He could.

I send this to you very ill written, scarcely legible, but

you may find it worth spelling out. Farewell.—Very truly yours, T. E.

243. TO THE REV. JOHN YOUNG.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 18*th Feb.* 1867.

DEAR SIR,— . . . There is one thing which I have long felt to be a great defect in our popular theologies, the want of distinguishing between faith, as meaning filial trust in God—the faith which Jesus Christ Himself had and lived by—and faith as meaning belief in what Jesus Christ was, and did, and suffered. The value of the first is that it constitutes spiritual life, whilst the value of the second consists in its furnishing and explaining and illustrating the ground on which the first rests.

A man who, though entirely unacquainted with the Jewish or Christian Scriptures, had yet attained to filial trust in God, to the confident assurance that God was his loving Father, and that His purpose in creating him was to train him into a participation of His own righteousness and blessedness—such a man would possess true faith, the faith which Jesus Himself had, and such a man would truly "have the Son" in the spiritual meaning of the text, "He that hath the Son hath life." "Christ in you the hope of glory" is, I believe, the universal condition of humanity, having the same meaning as the word "God created man in His own image." Man has this image, this indwelling spirit in him, which is really the spirit of faith, and which testifies within him that he is not his own; that as he is neither his own creator nor sustainer, so he cannot be his own end, or object, or portion; that he must be a dependent receiver, and that the giver from whom he receives must be love—a loving Father—as otherwise His gifts could never satisfy the heart, and His commandments could never be obeyed. Faith is the law of spiritual gravitation, the

spiritual nexus of the universe, the open mouth whereby the spiritual creation receives out of God. Jesus is the first truster, and all our belief in Him is to help us to enter into His trust, the trust which He has in the Father. I agree with you in your strong protest against the idea of satisfaction to divine justice. I believe, moreover, that man could never afford to want any punishment that God could inflict upon him, and that it is a universal and unchangeable law of the universe that God afflicteth not willingly, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. The man who really believes this is put right—he is ready for anything that comes. If you know the *Gorgias* of Plato, you will understand me when I say that I learned the meaning of justification by faith from that dialogue, before I saw it in St. Paul. I am at present engaged in writing a few last words, which I find great difficulty in doing to my own satisfaction. When it is done I shall beg your acceptance of a copy. It will be a very heterogeneous miscellany, I believe. . . .

244. TO THE REV. JOHN YOUNG.[1]

Feb. 1870, *answered 5th Feb.*

DEAR SIR,—I am not able to write a letter such as ought to be written in answer to yours. I can only say that I do not believe that thinking people will be helped to take hold of the doctrine of Universal Salvation by mere texts. I believe that the assurance that the purpose of God in creating man was the loving, righteous, fatherly purpose of educating him into His own fellowship, *i.e.* a participation in His own righteousness, is the true basis of such a belief. And as the whole Bible seems to me intended to give that assurance, I feel as if I were weakening the great general effect by picking out particular texts.

[1] The last letter written by Mr. Erskine—left unsigned.

"Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will He teach sinners in the way," was, I think, the first text that led me to the desired conclusion, and after that the 107th Psalm; and in the New Testament, the end of the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and also the end of the 11th chapter. Some of the chapters of Jeremiah, from the 29th to the 33d, contain the same meaning very strongly,—also the 26th chapter of Leviticus. The purpose of all punishment being education is surely the true argument,—that purpose, one may say, being necessary to the very existence of love and of righteousness.

XI.—DOCTRINE OF THE FATHER AND THE SON.

245. TO MRS. GURNEY.

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *Good Friday* 1862.

DEAR MRS. GURNEY, . . . —It is indeed wonderful! If there is no goodness but what is in God, and flows out from God, then there must be in Him two kinds of goodness,—first, the goodness of giving and blessing and ruling; and second, the goodness of receiving and trusting and obeying—the Father and the Son—active and passive goodness, united in one Spirit. Jesus says, "I do nothing of myself. Whatsoever the Father saith unto me, that I do. My Father is greater than I, and yet I and my Father are one." There are thus, as it were, two hemispheres in God, upper and under, distinct personalities. The unity of God is not singleness—it is completeness; and would not a God of love, living from eternity without an object, without a recipient of His love, be incomplete? Is not the thought of such a thing most oppressive and

overwhelming to the mind? And the moral creation is appended to the lower hemisphere, united to the Son, as He prays "that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me—I in them and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one," etc. This I find helpful towards the knowledge of God. Contemplating this idea of God, I see and feel that love is His nature, giving and receiving sympathy in communion; no doctrine can ever have been taught by God except to help us nearer Himself, not that we should simply submit our reason to it.—Dear friend, yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

246. TO MRS. GURNEY.

41 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 14*th May* 1862.

DEAR MRS. GURNEY, . . . —I am not sure, from your notice of it, whether you really appreciated what I said about the doctrine of the Father and the Son. I think that in general, even where it is considered as capable of some explanation, the explanation offered is simply its relation to man's redemption, and yet I am satisfied that its true explanation must be helpful in knowing God Himself. Now this help seems to me largely given in the doctrine of the Father and the Son. When we contemplate God before creation—if we can realise such a state in our imaginations—we are sometimes overwhelmed and lost in the sense of a dreary depressing solitude. From everlasting God had been, and God is love. His life consists in love, yet whom had He to love? The idea of love in action excludes the idea of singleness; oneness then is not singleness—oneness is completeness. Then in this completeness there cannot be absolute equality; order always supposes inequality,—"My Father is greater than I." There is the order of giving and receiving, governing and obeying, blessing and trusting. This lower hemisphere is the Son, continually receiving and

returning the Father's love, giving a sympathising response to every thought and feeling in the Father's mind. It is a manifestation of love, and the moral creation is appended to the lower hemisphere that it may partake in the spirit of the Son—"I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Faith implies recipiency; the Son's faith receives out of the Father, and man is created in the Son that he may receive of the divine nature and the eternal life. Thus the creation of man necessarily supposes the purpose of Incarnation, the recipiency of the divine nature by flesh, the difference between the Head and the members being this, that the Head is God assuming flesh—men are flesh receiving God.

We read the sermons on your brother-in-law with exceeding interest. He must have been a noble-hearted man and a true. I regret in reading them that I had not endeavoured to become intimate with him, that I might have imbibed some of his spirit. I feel that your husband must have loved him and honoured him, and must have felt his human existence much impoverished by his removal. I myself had a most noble-hearted brother, whom I loved and honoured and trusted entirely, and even now the thought of him helps me to realise my relation to the great Elder Brother, the loving Head of men, who is in each one of us as the head of the natural body is present by the nervous system in every member of the body. He is closer to us than aught else, and is continually seeking to train us into a perfect sympathy with Himself, sympathy with the Father and the Son in every thought and feeling. This is the eternal life; it is a participation in God's own will, and God's will is His life. Mrs. Paterson has been unusually ill lately, and we do not feel that she is yet round the corner.

I beg my very kind regards to your husband and also

to Mrs. Cowper, besides great love to your mother from us all.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

247. TO MRS. BATTEN AND MRS. RUSSELL GURNEY.

13 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 23*d Feb.* 1863.

BELOVED FRIENDS, MOTHER AND DAUGHTER,—Any word from you is always most welcome and refreshing, bringing intimations of the eternal sympathy which is also the eternal harmony. I am thankful to find that you have found, in one important matter, that oneness—I mean, that you have found that in very deed the consent of your will to the will of God, in opposition to all self-seeking, is the true order and the true blessedness. Milton speaks of concent as arising out of consent, the *c* marking the musical harmony, the *s* the harmony of feeling. The Father and the Son dwelling in the sympathy of one Spirit are the Fountain of all love, and all goodness, and all blessedness. Wherever we see good, we see the presence of God, for there is no other good. It may be unacknowledged by the creatures in whom it appears; but it is always acknowledged at the Fountainhead by Him who is the beginning of the creation of God, and in whom all things consist. The Eternal Receiver lovingly and thankfully acknowledges the Eternal Giver as His Father and our Father, as His God and our God; and His continual work is to produce this loving and thankful receiving in the whole creation, and when this is accomplished then will come forth the full burst of song, which the ear of the Psalmist heard, though far off, and which our ears will one day hear as the actual voice of the Universe.[1]

My sister is better, and in the drawing-room; but she

[1] See also "The Divine Son," being the second chapter in *The Spiritual Order*, pp. 28-46 (2d edit.)

does not expect to have her accustomed capabilities until she can drive out, which she hopes soon to do, but which cannot be tried without a certain risk. I hope if we are spared till summer that we shall have the great pleasure of seeing you both at Linlathen. These annual meetings must soon come to an end in the course of nature, but the eternal meeting never ends. My sister Davie is very well for her—enjoying her friends, young and old as always. We all three unite in truest love to you both. Farewell.—With my and our best regards to Mr. Gurney, ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

CHAPTER XIX.

Letters of Sympathy and Consolation.

On being informed by Mr. F. Russell of Mr. Erskine's visit to him at the time of his wife's death, Mr. A. J. Scott wrote, "It was with no small pleasure I thought of Erskine being with you at such a time, the man who, of all I ever knew, renders humanity and Christianity most completely into the form of sympathy."[1] Vinet was in the habit of referring to a slight but not insignificant expression of the humanity of this sympathy. He and Mr. Erskine were spending an evening in the house of a common friend. Some moths flickered around the lights, till one touched them and was half burned. Mr. Erskine hastened to abridge its sufferings by seizing it and plunging it into the flame. "Ceci était tout ordinaire, mais c'était l'expression de compassion, de souffrance intime, presque de sympathie, la délicatesse avec laquelle il avait saisi la pauvre bête, qui avait profondément touché Vinet."[2] "Mr. Erskine," Dr. Campbell tells us, "used to fix a child's eye by a look of kindness when we walked among the happy little groups in the Tuileries, and when he elicited a responsive smile he would say, 'That child's spirit and mine have communion.'"[3] His simple look of sympathy in one instance exercised quite

[1] Extract from letter dated Manchester, July 19, 1865.
[2] Preface to "La Pleine Gratuité du Pardon," p. 21.
[3] *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 245.

a singular influence. The story was told him of one living at the time in the same hotel with him in Switzerland, upon whom had just been flung such a burden of sorrow as inflicted intense mental agony. Just as Mr. Erskine had taken in the whole tale of grief, the sufferer entered the room. They did not know each other, were not introduced, but such was the effect of the look of sympathy that Mr. Erskine bent upon him that the sufferer threw himself into his arms and laid his head upon his shoulder, weeping. It was his large capacity for sympathy which gave him such power as a consoler. He had, besides, a gospel of consolation to impart which he lost no opportunity to apply to the hearts of all, whatever the nature and source of their suffering,—a gospel which embodied itself in one of his favourite hymns, a copy of which he was in the habit of sending to friends :—

I say to thee, do thou repeat
To the first man thou mayest meet
In lane, highway, or open street,

That he and we and all men move
Under a canopy of love,
As broad as the blue sky above.

. . . . .

And ere thou leave him say thou this
Yet one word more—they only miss
The winning of that final bliss

Who will not count it true that love,
Blessing, not cursing, rules above,
And that in it we live and move.

And one thing farther make him know,
That to believe these things are so
This firm faith never to forego,

Despite of all that seems at strife
With blessing, all with curses rife,
That *this* is blessing, *this* is life.

248. TO MISS PRISCILLA MAURICE.[1]

LINLATHEN, 21*st Oct.* 1850.

DEAR FRIEND,—I suppose that you are fast journeying to your rest, and I wish once again, before you leave this scene of things, to send you a word of sympathy. I have been refreshed and quickened by reading your book on the duties and consolations of the sick, and I have felt thankful on your behalf that in such circumstances as yours you have been sustained to write it. It is a loving legacy to leave to your brethren. What a full and pregnant thing life is, when God is known ; and what a weary emptiness it is without Him ! The gift of existence would be indeed an intolerable burden if one did not believe fully that He who is the Fountain of existence is able to give it a true and unfailing interest. Without that faith what reflecting spirit could join in the thanksgiving for "creation and preservation"? Dear friend, you can thank God for creation, for it has been to you an introduction into His own eternal fulness. I am a sinner, yet I feel as if my God had given me a claim on Him, a deep undeniable claim on Him, by drawing me out of the rest of nothingness into this conscious existence, this consciousness of emptiness, this capacity of horror from this emptiness unfilled. But all this emptiness is another name for the capacity of being filled,—filled, dear friend, with God. The river of God is full of water, and He will moisten and fill these parched hearts of ours out of the river of His own Life. Whatever fears, whatever doubts, may stir within us, of weariness and withering, let us be ready with our answer : Christ in me, the hope, the eternal

[1] Sister of the Rev. F. D. Maurice, and authoress of the *Trials and Blessings of Sickness.*

hope, of satisfying joy. The untiring state of a spirit is love and duty, and these we have in the Father and the Son. "Thou art my hiding-place." "Because I live, ye shall live also." Farewell.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

Mr. Erskine had no personal acquaintance with Richard Cobden. He knew him only as a public man, and as a friend of Mrs. Schwabe. But the sad and sudden death of Mr. Cobden's only son opened the floodgates of a sympathy which poured itself out in this touching letter :—

249. TO MRS. SCHWABE.

122 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH,
27*th April* 1856.

DEAR FRIEND,—I have just heard of your return to England, and of the melancholy event which has occasioned it. It seems to be your vocation to weep with those that weep, to be brought into connection with the suffering and the sorrowful, that you may give them that comfort which true sympathy cannot fail to supply. We grieve for the Cobdens,—an only son, a first-born, so suddenly snatched away without the satisfaction of watching over him and meeting his last looks. I don't wonder at their desire to see you, as the friend who had last seen him, and who could repeat to them some of his words, and perhaps tell them things indicating a noble and loving nature in him which promised to develop itself in much that was great and good. You may tell them these things, and enter into their sorrow with a true human and maternal heart. And yet I feel that the best human sympathy really fails in its object if it does not help the mourner to rise to a living fountain of sympathising love at the top and centre of all things, on which he may depend with absolute confidence,

not only for real sympathy, but also for doing what is best, and wisest, and kindest. And does not that parental relation which has given your poor friends so much joy, and is now giving them so much sorrow—does not that mysterious relation of love conduct us up to the same top and centre of the Universe, revealing to us that that central fountain and regulator is a father's and mother's heart? If this be not so, we are all orphans, and if this be so, we have all a Father who is training us, by a way that His wisdom sees best, into a participation in His own character, His own love and truth and righteousness, and feeling with us in all the duties and difficulties and sorrows which that discipline requires. The idea of a sorrowing God shocks the minds of many. It does not shock mine; I cannot conceive love being without sorrow. I cannot believe that man can give me a sympathy which God does not give me; I cannot believe that man can give me a sympathy which does not flow into him from God; and if any one should say to me, Why does an omnipotent God bring creatures into existence who grieve themselves and cause grief to Him? I answer, God, in making men, made creatures whom He desired to be good; goodness means choosing to be good; they cannot be made good, they must choose it, and omnipotence cannot do that without unmaking the man; wise and loving training must do it. God desires the joy of seeing His creatures choose to be good, and the capacity of choosing to be good implies the capacity of refusing to be good, and thus the possibility of such a joy is always accompanied with the risk of a great sorrow, which sorrow, I believe, God knows and feels. Your friends do not sorrow as those without hope. They hope to see their child again, no longer a child, but what his childhood promised. He is still in God's school, under his Father's eye and training; they

also themselves are in God's school, in another room from their boy, but under the same eye, the same guidance, as he and we all are. And it seems to me that we might have a real communion with all the scholars in that great school, whether here or elsewhere, if we were to cultivate as we might our relation with our heavenly Teacher and Father. We are members one of another; we belong to one great whole; we can never sever ourselves from them, do what we will; but our communion would be of the right and blessed kind were we to make it our continual business to enter into the mind and purpose of God concerning us and all men, and so to become conscious and willing fellow-workers with Him in working out that great salvation which consists in the spiritual rightness of all humanity. I need not say to you that this is the view which Christianity gives of God; it sets Jesus Christ before us sympathising with and participating in every form of human suffering in order that He might draw men up to love and righteousness; and through His whole course He tells us that it was as the Revealer of the Father that He appeared on earth; thus signifying that it was by no act of omnipotence that man was to be redeemed from the power of sin, which is in fact from the power of selfishness, but by a true sympathy, a true holy love. God bearing man's burden with him, God, as it were, sacrificing Himself that man might learn to sacrifice himself,—this is the sympathy which can alone heal the broken heart with true healing. And what a teaching there is in sorrow! How it elevates and enriches the spirit! The Cobdens did not desire your presence merely because you were the last friend who had seen their son; they desired to see you because they knew that you had yourself sorrowed, that the soil of your heart had been deepened and fertilised by having the ploughshare of sorrow passing through it. The

veriest triflers learn wisdom through sorrow; as I look back on my own life I find all the most remarkable epochs marked by the deathbeds of those whom I loved. These were fresh starting-points for the character. This must be a common experience. Then again, how much has Mr. Cobden's sorrow changed my whole feeling towards him. I before thought of him only as a public man; I admired his talent and his public spirit, and I knew him as the holder of certain views of social policy, with some of which I agreed, and with some I disagreed. But now I feel towards him as a suffering man, as a bereaved father, and as an affectionate husband, as one opening his heart to human sympathy. Thus sorrow breaks down the barriers and removes the boundaries which separate us from each other. And now, dear friend, to carry this thought still further, do you not think that, whilst we regard God as a great sovereign, just and generous it may be, but out of the reach of our joys and sorrows, not needing our love, but only requiring it as a duty, we may talk of loving Him, but it is only talk? we cannot love Him till we know that in His heart there dwells a true humanity, a capacity of sorrow, an actual suffering under all the sin and sorrow of His creatures, a need of our love and of our sympathy, until we see him manifested in the Man who wept at the grave of Lazarus, who wept over Jerusalem, and drank the cup of human suffering even to its dregs. As I was writing, Miss —— came in and told me she had just fallen in with an account of Luther's feelings when he lost his little daughter Madeleine.[1] It struck me that it might be soothing to your friends to read it and to mix their sorrow with that of the stout but tender-hearted Reformer.

[1] Michelet's *Life of Luther*, pp. 298-9.

250. TO F. RUSSELL, ESQ.[1]

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 25*th July* 1855.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I must not delay to answer your most touching letter. You seem to find it good to be afflicted, and as I believe the only real good consists in the discovery of an unseen spiritual portion in the love of God, so I believe that discovery is generally made through the rent veil of the flesh of visible and temporal hopes and possessions. And when the spirit does really meet its Father, and find Him to be the infinite loving One, giving us His love, and asking our loving confidence, then it understands that word of the Man of Sorrows, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." There is no brotherhood like the brotherhood of sorrow. The true purpose of sorrow is to reveal a need and the Supplier of all need: and its consolation, as you say, does not consist in teaching us to undervalue the blessings that have been removed, but by showing us that what constituted their essence, their true value, is not and cannot be taken from us:—*for all live in Him.* Dear friend, the peace of God be with you; and may He provide good guidance and good protection to your little ones. I am glad that I have seen her—I never could forget her—that delicacy of nature and texture that one could weep at. But all live in Him. —Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

251. TO MRS. MACNABB.[2]

Feb. 1860.

DEAR FRIEND,—I feel a desire to write to you, and yet it is chiefly to say to you that I feel for you, and in some measure feel with you, under this heavy blow. . . . A bond has been broken which I believe has had more

[1] On being informed of the death of Mr. R.'s wife.

[2] On the death of her husband.

tenderness in it than is generally found in similar bonds, but there is a bond remaining which our Lord indicates when He says, "I in you, and you in me,"—a bond uniting us to God and also to each other, which is not to be broken, belonging as it does to the Divine nature, being in truth Christ Himself, resting in which we may in all circumstances rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This is the fourth heavy sorrow under which I have known you, and it is the heaviest of them all. I always loved your husband and admired his purity and tenderness, and the delicate affection of his nature, and I in some measure felt what he was as a husband and a father and a friend. I felt how deep and unselfish an interest he took in all with whom he was connected. I was much impressed with that feature of his character when I last saw him in Barry's Hotel, and I know the hold that such a quality takes of the hearts of those who are daily under its influence. When I saw him at that time I had the feeling that he was not well, that the gift which you all had in him was precarious and anxious. But then, in whose hand was he? in whose hand are you all? This is the everlasting consolation, dear friend. You would feel the mercy of James being in Europe, and being able to soothe the last hours of his father, and of Flora being also back in time. Farewell; the peace of God be with you all.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. Erskine.

252. TO THE REV. CHARLES MONEY.

Linlathen, Dundee, 17*th June* 1862.

Dear Friend,—I have heard from Mrs. Cameron that you are in very deep sorrow, that the Lord has laid His hand heavily on you. But it is His hand, our Father's hand, who afflicteth not willingly, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. I have this morning

been reading the 22d Psalm, the cry of Him who was afflicted more than any man, and He seems to seek and find a rest for His spirit, not in anything which could distinguish Him from any child of Adam, but in that which was common to Him with them all. 'Thou art He that took me out of my mother's womb. I belong to Thee, I have none to look to but Thee. I am Thine, oh save me. There is no created thing that can help me, it must be Thyself. Thou hast made me for Thyself, and it is Thyself only that can help me or satisfy me.' The universal temptation is to give to God's gifts the place which belongs to God Himself, so that we seek our satisfaction in them and not in Himself; and yet we can only have the eternal life in so far as we know Him and feel Him to be our portion, and thus enter into sympathy with Him and with His loving purpose towards ourselves and all others. I believe that we cannot truly and rightly love God's gifts until we know the Giver and can discern Him in His gifts. I know well that it cannot be a full consolation to you to believe, and even to experience, that you are to be brought nearer to God by this stroke. God gave you in her an object whom you knew and loved as an individual. He intended that you should so love her, and He knew that if, in taking her, He had said, 'I will give you something better,' He would have been in some sort mocking your sorrow. You would have said, 'I loved herself; anything, even though better, is not what can satisfy the affection which Thou hast given me for her.' I believe that this is often overlooked. God loves us as individuals, and He intends that we should love and appreciate others as individuals. Observe the endless variety of human characters. He knows the idiosyncrasy of each one, and He desires both to receive sympathy from each one according to that idiosyncrasy, and to give this to each one in the same way. "How precious are Thy

thoughts unto me, O God! and how great is the sum of them!" He has counted the hairs of our heads. I believe that nothing is lost but evil, and that there is a special purpose of wise love in all God's gifts to us, therefore she is not lost, but laid up by God for Him and for you. I believe that God is love, and that love demands sympathy. Benevolence may be satisfied with a general well-being in its objects, but this does not satisfy love. Love is not satisfied with submission; it requires that we should enter into its purposes. Our Lord's prayer for us is, "I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Beloved Charles, this is our high vocation, and we are to be trained for it by entering into the mind of God in all His appointments. I thank God for all the affection which I have experienced from my fellow-creatures. I endeavour to receive it and remember it as a pledge of His love, His love to me, His love to each individual. He has taught me by it that He has made me for sympathy, to find my happiness in sympathy, and has thus drawn me upward to seek His own sympathy, as that which harmonises and sanctifies all lower sympathies. I often look back to Venice, and to the love which I met there, and thank God for it. I think of your loving and beloved mother, and dear Mary, and all the rest, and the excellent and venerable father. You were highly privileged in being born into a house of love, stamping on your young minds the image of our Father's house above, where ever remain the spiritual and eternal types of all human affections. Let us then set our affections on things above, on that which is really heavenly, even in the things which are on earth,—for when we see and love God in His gifts, our affections are really set on things above, whilst we love things which are on earth. Give my best love to your mother (and mine), and to the sister and the brothers.

T. ERSKINE.

253. TO DR. JOHN BROWN.[1]

3 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *7th Jan.* 1864.

YES, my dear friend, I am sure you are nothing but grateful to God for her release. He had His own wise and loving purpose in detaining her here so long, in that state of mind which He had permitted and appointed, and she and you will doubtless one day know and rejoice in the accomplished effect of that purpose; but we can without hesitation acknowledge the mercy of her deliverance. What a blessed and glorious thing human existence would be, if we fully realised that the infinitely wise and infinitely powerful God loves each one of us with an intensity infinitely beyond what the most fervid human spirit ever felt towards another, and with a concentration as if He had none else to think of! It is to His hands that you have to trust her, and it is in His hands that she now is, always has been, and always will be. And this love has brought us into being, just that we might be taught to enter into full sympathy with Him, receiving His,—giving our own —thus entering into the joy of our Lord. This is the hope—the sure and certain hope—set before us; sure and certain, for "the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

I always hope to be a better man by everything of the kind I hear—more free from the bondage of corruption, selfishness, and seen things; and more thoroughly possessed with the conviction that at every step in the journey of life I have the opportunity given me of being a fellow-worker with God in working out this great salvation.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

[1] On the death of his wife.

Mr. Erskine was not in Edinburgh when the carriage of his friend Mr. Constable, without any fault on the part of the driver, passed over the body of a child and caused its death. He heard of the sad accident at Linlathen, and knowing what grief it would occasion to a spirit kindred with his own, his sympathetic nature sought and found relief in the following note :—

254. TO MR. THOMAS CONSTABLE.

LINLATHEN, 23*d June* 1865.

MY DEAR MR. CONSTABLE,—Ever since I heard of that great affliction, I have desired and intended to express my sympathy with you and Mrs. Constable. I do not know any two persons who by the tenderness of their natures were more fitted to feel all the agony of such an occurrence. At the same time, I know that both of you live under the deep conviction that nothing can happen by accident—that God overrules all things, and has a gracious and wise purpose in adapting them to our spiritual education.

I know that you can never escape from this suffering except by realising this loving purpose of your heavenly Father,—and thus He, as it were, lays it on you as a necessity, to have Him and His loving purpose ever present in your thoughts as your only refuge from agony.

If such is the purpose of God in permitting this tragical event (and what other purpose with regard to you two can we suppose Him to have had ?), is it not your wisdom to make use of it for this purpose, and whenever it recurs to your minds, just to accept it as a direct call from Him to keep near to Him, to listen to what He will speak, assured that His only desire is to wean you from the power of seen things, and to make you partakers of His own eternal life ?

Most assuredly our Father has had a wise and loving

purpose in this thing, towards the child and the parents :— the education of the child was to be carried on better in other circumstances, and the parents were to learn that God was the only satisfying portion of the souls which He has made.

I suggest these things—though it is probable that the very same thought has occurred to yourselves. May the consolations of God be with you !

It is always pleasant to me to write your name, and even to think of it.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

CHAPTER XX.

Reminiscences by Arthur P. Stanley, D.D., Dean of Westminster.

You ask me to give an account of my recollections of the conversations of Thomas Erskine. I have always felt that whilst it was impossible to form any conception of the man except from his conversations, it is almost equally impossible to give to one who had no experience of them an adequate idea of what those conversations were.

Their peculiarity consisted, if I may use words which I have employed in another place, and to which I may refer for my general impression of his place in the religious history of Scotland,[1] in the exquisite grace and ease with which he passed from the earthly to the heavenly, from the humorous to the serious, from the small things of daily affection or business to the great things of the ideal world. It resembled the flight which I have seen amongst the innumerable sea-fowl in the neighbourhood of the Bass Rock, in which the wild birds dart with equal felicity out into the air, or feed upon the rocks, or dive and play in the deep waters. All three elements seem alike familiar to them. So it was with the topics of conversation over which our friend's mind glanced to and fro. I can only profess to give some notion of his manner by a succession of fragmentary instances.

The Psalms.—He was, as you are aware, in the habit of

[1] *Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland.*

reading in the family devotions the Psalms and Lessons as they occur in the calendar of the Church of England. He used to say, "I greatly value the fixed order in which this calendar induces me to go through the various parts of the Bible irrespectively of my own predilection or fancies;" and then he would add, with a twinkle of his peculiar humour, "And this, I think, is the one single spiritual benefit which I have derived from the Church of England."

On one of these occasions the Psalm which he read was the 136th, where the words occur: "Who smote Egypt and their first-born; for His mercy endureth for ever. Who overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea; for His mercy endureth for ever." "Yes," he said, in speaking of it afterwards, "that has a meaning beyond what the Psalmist knew. There was mercy even for Pharaoh; even Egypt and their first-born had a place in the mercy of God. Egypt and Assyria shall be blessed in the midst of the land." And then, with the same thought darting forward to the stern text in the New Testament, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated,"—"Yes," he said, "but Jacob was chosen for *his* special purpose, and Esau, that fine generous character, was rejected yet preserved for another purpose not less special." "The purpose of God for all of us is to make us better. He can have no other intention for us."

He touched also on the 139th Psalm, with its description of the penetrating omniscience of God. "That is the Psalm which I should wish to have before me on my death-bed."

"How natural and free are the expressions of the Psalms! They begin with that great universal benediction on the upright honest man, 'the noblest work of God,' and they end with the generous universal invocation of all nature —'Let every thing that hath breath'—every creature, without limit or exception—'praise the Lord.'"

"How admirable are the 90th, 91st, and 103d Psalms! Never surely were any writings like these of David! Do tell me, you who know history, has any other king written anything of the kind? Listen to the 23d Psalm! Listen to the 1st Psalm!" And he then repeated both these from memory in Hebrew.

"'There is mercy with Thee, for Thou renderest to every man according to his works.' That is a very fine passage; and so is this, 'He that believeth shall not make haste.' There are some who are so fond in all matters of snatching, that they snatch here and there, 'and grudge if they be not satisfied.'"

Here are remarks on more general subjects.

"The redemption in Jesus Christ is shown to us by His own redemption of Himself; by His own faith persevering to the end, even to the giving up of His life, which is what is signified by His blood. 'Into Thy hands I commend my spirit,'—that expresses the supreme purpose of His life and death."

"The day of judgment is not the only last day: it is a judgment, a crisis, like others in life. We are judged that we may be taught, not taught that we may be judged."

He was fond of dwelling on the passages in the Bible which bring out the overbalance of love and mercy as against vengeance and wrath. "This," he said, "shows the right proportion of faith." And one of these to which he often referred was the close of the second commandment —"visiting the sins of the fathers unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and *showing mercy* unto—(not "thousands," as of individuals—but—) UNTO THE THOUSANDTH AND THOUSANDTH GENERATION—(quoting the words of the Hebrew original—) *of them that love me.*" I never read that part of the commandment without thinking of this saying, and of the tones in which he uttered it.

He would often speak of the incidents in life which seem like steps in our spiritual education. "Every one," he used to say, "ought to cherish with peculiar care the one instance in life which seems to him not to have been fortuitous, as St. Paul did the vision on the way to Damascus."

I had mentioned to him immediately after my appointment to the Deanery of Westminster that I was startled by hearing in the service on the day of my installation a special prayer which had always been used on such occasions in Westminster Abbey, that the new-comer might be enabled to do his best for the *enlargement* of God's Church, the very thing which seemed to me most important to be done. This delighted him. "That," he said, "is your oracle or χρησμός—just like the oracle delivered at Delphi to Socrates: an oracle said a hundred times before, yet at last lighting on the man who felt it."

He often spoke of the difficulty of accommodating himself entirely to any one form of Christian worship. "I am inclined," he said once, "to think," with a full sense of the humour of what he was saying, "that the last and best revision of the Liturgy would be to enjoin absolute silence."

Critical Remarks.—He had no turn for critical inquiries himself, but was much delighted in conversing about them with others. When he first read Renan's book he exclaimed, "This is beautiful! If it is to be answered at all, it should be answered in French, as fine as its own French, and by another Pascal! Throughout the book it is evident that the author entertains a far higher idea of Christ than he likes to confess even to himself."

In speaking of the objection which religious people have to historical investigations into the origin of the Sacred Books, he said it reminded him always of the speech of

an old woman to Miss Dundas, who was telling her of the journey of William Dundas to Palestine, "Ye 'll no' tell me that there 's such a place on earth as Jerusalem."

"The *Λογία* of St. Matthew contains not only the teaching of Christ, but Christ Himself. Look at the seventh chapter."

Personal Remarks.—Here are a few anecdotes, personal or historical, partly interesting in themselves, but partly because they recall the peculiar emphasis with which he related them.

"'Do you know what the Covenant is?' was said to an old Scottish wife. 'I dinna ken what it is, but I 'll *mainteen* 't.' That expresses a vast amount of common theology."

"What is so very remarkable in the Old Testament is the continuity of the successive teachers. How striking are those words at the end of the 72d Psalm, even though they don't specially relate to it—'The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.' He had nothing more or greater to ask for than the petitions of the 72d Psalm."

"Those who make religion their God will not have God for their religion."

"How I wish that Paul were here for a month to tell us what he meant by *χάρισμα* in the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans! How I wish that he had but just spoken a little more distinctly!

"We ought not to deny the existence of anything because of the difficulty of imagining how it exists. To deny the existence of rational creatures in the moon because it is difficult to imagine them there, is like the priest who not being able to find the Baptismal Service in the Mass-book, said, 'C'est un enfant très-difficile à baptiser.'"

To the question, What is to be said of the moral purpose of the worst characters of mankind?—"Characters,"

he said, "like Iago or Judas, or like many of the depraved classes of great towns, are to be explained by the detestation of evil they cause in themselves and others. The conversion of Judas might result from the new fact of seeing his own sin."

"Christianity in its progress through the world has had less than its due. Mohammedanism in its progress has had more."

"There are some men who are profuse in giving out of their own mind what they have. Such a one was Bunsen: that is noble. There are others who economise and keep to themselves what they have, unless they find those whom they think worthy to hear it. Such has been some other one: that is ignoble."

A servant of William Stirling of Keir, in 1713, was called to give evidence as to whether his master had been present at a treasonable meeting at the Brig of Turk. He swore positively that he had not. In reply to the remonstrances from his friends when he came out for this manifest perjury, he said, "I had rather trust my soul in God Almighty's hands than my master's head in the hands of those rascals."

"Adolphe Monod, had he lived and gone forward, would have grown out of the sphere of his admirers, as, in fact, did Vinet. Vinet could count those who wholly sympathised with him on his five fingers. His views were distorted by the temporary controversy on the relations of Church and State; but he was constantly going forward. He had a fine power of writing."

He had a deep sense of the horror of human wickedness, of the sinfulness of sin—the more remarkable from his fixed belief of the all-absorbing mercy of God and the final restoration of man. It was impossible to continue the conversation if it would take at all a light tone

in speaking of some base or dishonourable act, after the short, severe condemnation which filled his whole expression, both of language and countenance. And I seem still to hear the deep tones of his voice repeating the lines from *Macbeth*, as an illustration of the terrible judgment of conscience upon sin :—

> "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased :
> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow ;
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain ;
> And with some sweet oblivious antidote
> Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,
> Which weighs upon the heart ?"

"What is Christianity ? It is the belief in the inexhaustible love of God for man." "He came to seek that which is lost, *until He find it.*" "What is human existence ? It is not probation, it is education. Every step we take upwards or downwards is a stepping-stone to something else." "What is the proper use of Religion ? The sun was made to see by, not to look at." "What is the effect of Revelation to us ? It is the disclosure to us of our true relations to God and to one another, as when an exile, after long years' absence, returns home, and sees faces which he does not recognise. But one in whom he can trust comes and says, 'This aged man is your father ; this boy is your brother, who has done much for you ; this child is your son.'"

These and such as these were amongst the sublime thoughts that sustained his soul in what at times might have seemed an almost entire isolation from all ecclesiastical ordinances, but what was, in fact, a communion with the inner spirit of all. Presbyterian by his paternal connection with the author of the *Institutes* and

the minister of Greyfriars, Episcopalian by his maternal descent and by his early education, it came to pass that in later life, whilst still delighting in the occasional services and ministrations of the Episcopal Church, and enjoying to the last the tender care of an Episcopalian curate, he yet frequented the worship and teaching of the National Church, both in country and in town—a living proof of the effacement of those boundary-lines which, before the exasperations of our latter days, were to many of the best Episcopalians and Presbyterians almost as if they did not exist. In all the varying Scottish communions he had those who counted his friendship one of their chief privileges; and not only there, and in the hearts of loving friends in England, but far away with Catholic Frenchmen in Normandy, and in the bright religious society in which he had dwelt in former days by the distant shores of Geneva, his memory was long cherished, and will not pass away so long as any survive who had seen him face to face.

I have heard it said that once meeting a shepherd in the Highlands, he said to him, in that tone which combined in so peculiar a manner sweetness and command, and with that penetrating emphasis which drew out of every word that he used the whole depth of its meaning, 'Do you know the Father?' and that years afterwards, on those same hills, he encountered the same shepherd, who recognised him and said, 'I know the Father now.' The story, whether true or not, well illustrates the hold which the memory of that face and figure and speech had on all who ever came across it.

There are not a few to whom that attenuated form and furrowed visage seemed a more direct link with the unseen world than any other that had crossed their path in life. Always on the highest summits at once of intellectual cul-

tivation and of religious speculation, he seemed to breathe the refined atmosphere

> "where the immortal shapes
> Of bright aërial spirits live insphered
> In regions mild, of calm and serene air,
> Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
> Which men call Earth."[1]

[1] See *Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland*, pp. 159-61.

CHAPTER XXI.

Death of his two Sisters.

Mr. Erskine was never married, but all, and more than all, that the sisters of Charles Lamb and Lord Macaulay were to their unmated brothers, his two sisters were to him. With a deeper meaning than was in the poet's words, he could have said of Mrs. Stirling what Wordsworth said of his dear sister Dorothy :—

> 'She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
> A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
> And love, and thought, and joy.'

After her short and childless married life, Mrs. Stirling returned to Linlathen to be more to him than ever. Of the outward things of life he took but little charge; they were left wholly in her hands. Gentle and gracious, but prudent and firm, unobtrusive and unimperious, she guided all, the guiding hand unfelt. More delicate than all ordinary domestic arrangements were her close and tender dealings with his deep and sensitive nature. In his more peculiar idiosyncrasies he needed sympathy from those nearest him. Such sympathy he got from her in measure so full that no want was ever felt, yet meted out so wisely as to be largely serviceable in preserving him from becoming too engrossed with the dominant idea of the time, or from carrying it too far. In this respect the understanding between them was as complete

as the attachment throughout was entire and unbroken. Her death was unexpected. In November 1866 her brother and she had removed from Linlathen to take up their quarters for the winter in Edinburgh, at No. 14 Charlotte Square. She was in her usual state of health till the end of the month, when the illness came upon her which in a few days proved fatal. In all her illnesses she had been especially fond of quiet, and she got it in her last. Early on the morning of the 1st December Mr. Erskine was called to her bed-side. Sick-nurse and good physician —their last offices rendered—retired. Brother and sister were left alone. "I like to feel you near," she said, as she took his hand, patted and held it. He felt its grasp relaxing. Then he took hers and held it till her gentle spirit passed quietly away. "A look of rest and peace remains on her dear face—a smile of complete satisfaction." [1] The sad event was announced on its occurrence by Mr. Erskine himself to two dear friends, and seldom has the character of a lost sister been more truthfully and vividly described, seldom has a death been more pathetically deplored, than in the letters which follow.

255. TO MRS. GURNEY.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *1st and 4th Dec.* 1866.

BELOVED EMILY,—It has pleased God to take my dear sister Christian to Himself. She died this morning after a week's illness, having been to me, for thirty years, my constant companion, my faithful, patient, loving friend, my mother, wife, sister, all in one. . . .

[1] From note written at the time by Mrs. Paterson to her uncle, Dr. M'Leod Campbell.

256. TO LADY AUGUSTA STANLEY.

CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 3*d Dec.* 1866.

BELOVED FRIEND,—Do you know what has come upon us? It has pleased God to take away my dearest sister Mrs. Stirling, who has now for thirty years been my chief earthly comfort and stay and guidance. You have known her, so you can in some degree appreciate my loss; she has been felt by all who have come near her to be the fitting depository of all sorrows and anxieties, because she had a heart always at leisure from itself, and so free to give a listening ear and a loving sympathy to every human being. I never heard her say an unkind word of any one, and I never saw her weary of doing good to any one whom she had once taken up, however undeserving.

I have found her the most trustworthy of friends and the most faithful and wisest of counsellors. I communicated everything that I heard or knew to her—as one always sure to help me to a right judgment on it. And now that place is empty—on which I used to lean so confidentially. It is empty, but God is behind that empty place, and I believe that He would teach me, by making it empty, to find Himself more really than I have ever done. All her patient love and ready sympathy flowed out of Him as their living Fountain, and He shows us the streams to guide us up to the Fountain. I know that I may trust Him fully—that He will never leave, never forsake—and yet I feel a desolateness unutterable. I have many friends; but none could fill her place. She had no crotchet, nor caprice, nor vanity. She never either spoke or acted for effect—all was love, and truth, and duty. Beloved and blessed friend, you will feel with me.—Yours most affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

My loving regards to the Dean.

An announcement similar to these was sent to Mr. Carlyle, from whom promptly came the following note, one of the first that Mr. Erskine received, and one of the most affectionate :—

MR. CARLYLE TO MR. ERSKINE.

CHELSEA, *5th Dec.* 1866.

OH my dear Mr. Erskine, what a boundless disaster has befallen you;—I know it too well! The one that was your own in this world is lost. The gentle, wise, and beautiful soul, who had lovingly attended you, and been your fellow-pilgrim and guardian spirit for so many years, is gone to her rest, and, in this world, can be with you no more.

I know well enough how vain are human words of comfort, nor will importune you with any such: you will go for some solacement where you know it is to be found; and time and meditation will abate the poignancy of what is at first so harsh and so strange. God is above us; *she* is with God, even as we are: what more can we say? If in the bitterness of your grief you sometimes reflect, "I am suffering this in her stead; had I gone first, it must have been she," you may find that a momentary encouragement, if only a momentary.

I write no more, dear Mr. Erskine; but I understand well how sad is your heart, and my sympathy with you, could it do the least good, is painfully true. God be with you, dear friend.—I am ever affectionately yours,

T. CARLYLE.

257. TO M. CRAMER MALLET.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, EDINR., *18th Dec.* 1866.

CHER AMI,—Mdlle. Clémentine aura la bonté de vous traduire la lettre suivante. It has pleased God to take to

Himself my dear sister Mrs. Stirling, who has all her life long been to me a loving friend, and for the last thirty years has been my companion and fellow-pilgrim—the light of my house, and the wise and sympathising arranger of my material life, as well as the gentle helper of my spiritual interests. It is impossible to exaggerate the loss that I have sustained; at the same time I feel that my sorrow is very selfish, for the gain to her has been I am sure unspeakable. I cannot expect to survive her long, being now seventy-eight years of age; but I know that not an hour of that time, whether it be longer or shorter, can pass without my feeling my need of her who has so long been my reminder and my adviser. I often feel that by this dispensation God would teach me to know that He who gave the gift is better than the gift, and that all the confidence which I placed in *her* may with still more assurance be placed in Him. If we can trust ourselves in the hand of a fellow-creature with undoubting confidence, surely we do wrong to God, if we do not lie with still more confidence in His hands. She was a living member of Jesus Christ, witnessing in her whole life that same love of which He is the fountain. Tell this to your brother Ernest, that I may have his sympathy as well as yours. Pray, do not discontinue to write to me. Your letters are always interesting to me, and used to interest her very much. I value your friendship exceedingly, remembering also the love of your dear parents.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

258. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 1*st Jan.* 1867.

DEAR MR. CAMPBELL,—I enter upon a new year with a feeling of loneliness, such as none can know but those who

have known and lost such a friend as my dear sister has been to me during my long life, and more especially during the last thirty years that we have passed together in closest intercourse. She has been to me a continual stay, and support, and witness for God, by her unwavering fidelity, and loving wisdom, and diligence in all duties.

If I could so trust her as I have trusted her, is it not doing our Father great wrong, if I do not absolutely and entirely trust Him?

This has been the special form of the witness which she has borne of God to the hearts of many—for she has been a much-trusted woman; people of all characters have felt that they might trust her, that she was at leisure from herself to attend to them and their griefs or interests with her whole heart.

I feel that my grief is for myself and for her surviving friends, and that she must now be nearer the fountain of love. "Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Love to your household. —Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

Mrs. Paterson was living at Morningside near Edinburgh at the time of her sister's death. Broken health, requiring change of climate, and family ties requiring separate residence, had hindered her from being so much with her brother as her elder sister. But still the intercourse was close and the communion perfect. As thoroughly at one with him in all the favourite ideas as her sister, there was a liveliness, a buoyancy, a force in her sympathy, as compared with that of her more placid-minded sister, which if it might have carried him farther on, would have lifted him higher up. He delighted in the youthfulness of spirit present in her to the close. That close was near at hand. She scarcely ever left her room after Mrs. Stirling's death.

Two months afterwards she became suddenly worse. "A joy and brightness indescribable shone in her face and was heard in her voice as at the close of a week's illness the doctor said that she was not likely to live another day. "Say that again," she said. "Did he say—to-night—that I shall see my God? Oh joy, joy!" The joy remained through all her suffering. She spoke of all whom she was so soon to meet, of all whom she left behind, passing every friend in review with a tender word of farewell for each. The favourite idea with her during that closing week was that it was *all one life*—the life here on earth, the life there in Heaven. In an interval of comparative relief, on the closing day, her eldest grandchild was brought to her. She took the child's hand in her own, and said, "Darling Mary, this is not the end of life, but the beginning of an endless life; I am now going to this life in heaven, but it is all one life. The life of Christ on earth—a daily dying to self, a daily dying to self—that is to be your life, my darling child." To another younger grandchild she said, "My darling, God does wish you to be so good; God does not only say, 'Boysie, you must not do this,' 'Boysie, you dare not do that,' but 'My child, take My hand and walk with Me.' And He will lead you in the paths of pleasantness, and you must not walk in them alone, you must take your brother with you." His father (her son) lifted the little boy up and she kissed him. With grave and wondering look the child was borne away, and after one burst of grief he said to his eldest sister, "I am happy, for granny is so very happy."

Her brother, who had called twice daily, now came in to her. "Tom, Tom," she said, "I shall not long speak to you. Listen to God. The Brandon Street life has been an open book before me these two days.[1] The life there, the

[1] Brandon Street, where Mr. M'Leod Campbell used frequently to stay

same always—eternal life. . . . Beloved Mr. Campbell, beloved Mr. Campbell. . . . To-night I shall see our elder brother; yes, I shall see our dearest James—but it is Jesus I mean. Yes, I shall see him to-night, and know Him for my very own Elder Brother. Oh wonderful! oh joy, joy! . . . Rest, did you not hear that? it was so clear. Light, did you not see that? no, you could not. . . . Hush, hush! He is near." Gently, very gently, she passed away.

259. TO LADY AUGUSTA STANLEY.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 27*th March* 1867.

BELOVED ONE,—You will sorrow with me in this sorrow as few can, for you had received much of her love, and knew its truth and sweetness and holiness, and you had returned her love, as a loving, trustful child. It is a call upward to all who knew her, for such love as hers is rarely seen on this earth. I almost remember her birth, and she has always appeared to me as a child—so young and fresh and simple in all her ways. I am glad the Dean knew her, for he will be able to understand what you may feel and say about her.

All things seem changing, but God remains a faithful Creator, absolutely to be depended on. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." And whatever of earthly love we hold in Him will always remain imperishable. These two sisters of mine are withdrawn from my sight, but the places which they occupied are not empty; God is there, and if I find them empty, it is because my spiritual perception does not discover Him there. This is the lesson which I have to learn hour by hour. I hope you sometimes see dear Katherine, Mrs. Erskine, who is now my nearest earthly

with the Miss Patersons, and where Captain and Mrs. Paterson used to meet him.

tie, and who, I hear, is very delicate, and feeling herself tottering.

My hour, as well as hers, cannot be distant. What a curious effect the noise and boisterousness of political life have in the presence of the deep silence of eternal things! —Ever with true love yours, T. ERSKINE.

260. TO M. CRAMER MALLET.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, 27*th March* 1867.

CHER ET ANCIEN AMI, FILS DES AMIS CHÉRIS,—Mdlle. Clémentine aura la bonté de vous traduire cette lettre, qu'il me faut écrire en Anglais, car je suis trop accablé pour m'arranger faire une leçon française.

My beloved sister Mrs. Paterson has not been long of following her elder sister. I saw her breathe her last on Saturday night, the 23d March, and now I remain the only survivor of my family. These two sisters have been good and precious gifts to me, for which I desire to be most thankful to my heavenly Father. They have been most helpful to me, by enabling me to realise that I live encompassed by an ever-loving presence and care of God. They have been streams out of that infinite Fountain, bearing witness to its unfailing fulness. Her symptoms did not alarm her family till within a very few days of the end; but she had herself felt the approach of death, and longed for it, as the entrance into near communion with her Father and her Saviour.

I never knew any one who had more spiritual enjoyment than she for many years, and she had that frank and open nature that allowed her to utter what she felt. It would be most ungrateful to God, and most unkind to them, to grudge them their deliverance from the burden of life, and their entrance into the fuller joy of their Lord; but their departure has made the world very empty to me.

I believe that my Father's purpose to me in all this is to make me know and feel more than I have ever done that He is Himself my rest, and joy, and dwelling-place. My affectionate regards to your sisters-in-law, and daughters, and Ernest.—Dear friend, very truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

Mr. Carlyle, as before, hastened with words of sympathy :—

MR. CARLYLE TO MR. ERSKINE.

CHELSEA, 1*st April* 1867.

DEAR MR. ERSKINE,—Your mournful tidings, not unanticipated, were abundantly sad to us here ; and have been painfully present ever since, though till now I have written nothing. Alas! what can writing do in such a case? The inexorable stroke has fallen ; the sore heart has to carry on its own unfathomable dialogue with the Eternities and their gloomy Fact ; all speech in it, from the friendliest sympathiser, is apt to be vain, or worse. Under your quiet words in that little note, there is legible to me a depth of violent grief and bereavement, which seems to enjoin silence rather. We knew the beautiful soul that has departed, the love that had united you and Her from the beginnings of existence,—and how desolate and sad the scene now is for him who is left solitary. Ah me! ah me!

Yesterday gone a twelvemonth (31 March 1866, *Saturday* by the day of the week) was the day I arrived at your door in Edinburgh, and was met by that friendliest of Hostesses and you ; three days before, I had left at the door of this room one dearer and kinder than all the earth to me, whom I was not to behold again : what a change for you since then, what a change for me! Change

after change following upon both of us,—upon you especially!

It is the saddest feature of old age, that the old man has to see himself daily grow more lonely; reduced to commune with the inarticulate Eternities, and the Loved Ones now unresponsive who have preceded him thither. Well, well; there is a blessedness in this too, if we take it well. There is a grandeur in it, if also an *extent* of sombre sadness, which is new to one; nor is hope quite wanting, —nor the clear conviction that those whom *we* would most screen from sore pain and misery are now safe and at rest. It lifts one to real kingship withal, *real* for the first time in this scene of things. Courage, my friend; let us endure patiently and act piously, to the end.

Shakespeare sings pathetically somewhere :—

> "Fear no more the heat of the sun,
> Nor the furious winter's rages;
> *Thou* thy weary task hast done,
> Home hast gone, and ta'en thy wages;"

—inexpugnable and well art *thou!* These tones go tinkling through me, sometimes, like the pious chime of far-off church bells.

Adieu, my friend. I must come to Scotland again at least once, if I live; and while you are there it is not quite a solitary country to me.—Yours ever truly,

T. CARLYLE.

261. TO MR. CARLYLE.

16 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *5th April* 1867.

DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—Your good and kind words are always very welcome and helpful. A purpose of goodness and kindness at the foundation of all things, and ordering

all things, is the only rest for the soul of man amidst the agitations of time, and every loving voice that reaches me bears its testimony to the existence of such a purpose, and its great Purposer. Yes, what changes have come upon both of us since that 31st of March last year, darkening our whole horizon! Still let us be comforted by the assurance that there is no accident in them, and that indeed that wise and loving purpose underlies them all, and, when truly entered into and understood, gives them a satisfying interpretation.

The complete separation which death makes is indeed wonderful—we must walk by faith and hope, or else lie down and die. I have great pleasure in reading the Psalms, and I endeavour to persevere in the same kind of work which has long occupied and interested me, and thus I keep afloat. Your recognition of me as one of the ties still drawing you to Scotland is very gratifying. My kind regards to the Doctor,[1] whose letter I have this morning received.—Yours affectionately, T. ERSKINE.

[1] Mr. Carlyle's brother.

CHAPTER XXII.

Letters of 1867-68-69.

AFTER Mrs. Paterson's death, at Mr. Erskine's desire her son with his family took up their permanent residence at Linlathen. He joined them there in the autumn of 1867. The sense of utter bereavement never left him, but very touching was the simplicity and grateful tenderness with which he met the unremitting attentions of every member of the new household and the sympathy of old friends who came to visit him in his sorrow. He kept up as he was able his old habit of going about among the cottages of the poor, and no sympathy was more welcome to him than that which came to him from those who mourned with him over a common loss. It pleases us to notice that there was another healing influence from which his deep grief did not shut him out, to which he was as open as he had ever been. On the 19th September he writes to a friend:—

262. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

LINLATHEN, 19*th Sept.* 1867.

. . . I HAVE been paying a visit to Miss Dundas at Perth for the last week, and have been making acquaintance with a most beautiful country, which has always been within my reach, but has never been really understood and felt by me till on this occasion. The

river Tay at Perth and above it is a glorious thing. It is just of a right size, quite graspable, but deep and strong and living, rapid and yet unbroken. Like the Rhone and the Rhine, it comes out of a lake, quite pure and full-grown. I think it more companionable than these are, because not so large. When you come again you must try to get acquainted with him. I have been also seeking deeper and more intimate acquaintance with the Creator of all things, with my Creator, whose hands have made me and fashioned me, and whose continual care of me is necessary to my existence. My spiritual life, I am sure, must consist in love, and there can be no other ever present, ever embracing love but His.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

Within doors at Linlathen much of his time was given to that work upon which now more than ever he was bent, but which increasing infirmities rendered him less and less capable of accomplishing as he desired. A pleasing break came in the arrival of a literary package from Mr. Maurice, which was thus acknowledged :—

263. TO MR. MAURICE.

LINLATHEN, DUNDEE, 28*th Oct.* 1867.

DEAR FRIEND,—I thank you for your kind gifts. I always find instruction in your thoughts. Our ordinary theology has been drawn chiefly from the Epistles, and often seems almost to overlook the personal teaching of Christ. I have heard a very intelligent professor say, that the Sermon on the Mount distinctly taught justification by works, in opposition to the Pauline doctrine. I conceive that any one who has such an idea must misunderstand both of his authorities.

By faith, Paul certainly means filial trust (the faith of

Jesus—the faith which Jesus [the Son of God] had: thus assuming that we are also His children, else we could not be called to have that faith). And assuredly our Lord rests the whole of His teaching on the fatherly relation of God to us. "That ye may be the children of your Father." He is already your Father, but He desires that you should be His worthy children.

I have been struck lately by the communication which God made to Moses at the Burning Bush. "I AM"—the personal presence and address of God. No new truth concerning the character of God is given; but Moses had met God Himself, and was thus strengthened to meet Pharaoh. There is an immense interval between "He" and "I"—between hearing about God and hearing God. What an interval!

I wish that you had a church in Cambridge as well as a chair—they might complete each other. I felt a need to apologise for my last letter, and I feel a similar need now. —Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

The winter of 1867-68 was again spent in Edinburgh. A visit from Mr. Maurice was doubly prized as having been volunteered. On both sides it was fully appreciated.

MR. MAURICE TO MR. ERSKINE.

3 ST. PETER'S TERRACE, CAMBRIDGE, 13*th Jan.* 1868.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I do indeed look back with much wonder and thankfulness to the intercourse with you which inaugurated the beginning of this year for me. There is so much in the interchange of convictions, even if one received nothing fresh; but you gave me what was the quickening of thought and life that had been in me doubtless, but that were not clearly and consciously in me, so that I

felt you to be truly an instrument of the Spirit doing and fulfilling His work. I have especially recurred to all you said about faith. It seems to me that all my teaching here ought to be affected by it. I cannot help fearing that we have been trying to build social life and personal life upon distrust and suspicion of each other, and of God; and that the human ἦθος is as you said that of trust; the man, the divine man, being the truster Himself, and the source of trust in all the race. I quite feel with you that Christ's trust in the Father is the sign and witness of His divine nature, that which corresponds to and shows forth the righteousness of God, that which is the form of righteousness for man. And I cannot doubt that in Him God has justified the trust of every man, Jew and Gentile, since the foundation of the world, and pronounced sentence on all the distrust and self-exaltation of every Jew and Gentile. All polities and societies grew up, I conceive, through the trust of men in each other, and through trust in some one whom they could not see and could not hear, but who, they felt, was not far from any one of them. And as clearly and obviously all polities and societies perished through distrust of the members in each other, and through distrust of their Father in heaven, through the establishment of some dark power to be dreaded and hated, not trusted, in His place. The revelation of the Father by the Son, as well as of the Son by the Father, was in truth that which men in all different ways, in their social acts and theories, as much as what would be called the religious acts and theories, had been showing that they needed. Christ came in the fulness of the time to bring to light the mystery that had been about all ages and generations, though hidden from all. And in all ages since, the trust of men in every work they have engaged in, as thinkers, discoverers, martyrs, has had no other root than that faith of Jesus Christ, that confidence

of Him in His Father which sustained Him in life and death, and to which He appealed in every leper, and blind, and palsied man, as well as in every one whom He raised from the dead. That I understood to be your meaning, and my conscience thoroughly responded to it.

I wish I had read more of your book and talked more about it with you. That part I read interested me deeply. And, I think, when you come to the third chapter of which you speak, you will be able to show how much its sense has been perverted by the efforts to make out a charge of universal depravity from it as the reason for the necessity of faith, whereas if I read him aright he is teaching us that the Psalmist found among the Jews of his age—those Jews who were in the covenant, and had every call to exercise faith,—an utter want of it, and therefore great moral corruption. "What the law speaks, it speaks to those who are under the law." The Jew is proved to have no better standing ground, in himself, or in his national privileges, than another man, that he and all might know that they have a standing ground in God's righteousness—that no trust in that can be wrong or can fail. All are concluded under sin, and proved to be sinners in themselves, that they might be all righteous in God, that they might, Gentiles as well as Jews, believe that Christ had manifested *that* for their justification. Justification by faith is surely a most wholesome and comfortable doctrine, when it means faith in a Justifier, in one who is righteous and who makes righteous. But is it not a pestilent doctrine if it means that we are justified by faith in our difference from those who are not justified? That is the very faith which St. Paul is beating to pieces as the essential unbelief.

F. D. MAURICE.

The "dark hollow of the year" was cheered by this letter from Mr. Carlyle :—

MR. CARLYLE TO MR. ERSKINE.

CHELSEA, 23*d January* 1868.

DEAR MR. ERSKINE,—The sight of your handwriting is itself welcome and cheering to me at all times. And I owe you many thanks this time for that pious little visit you have made to Greenend and poor Betty.[1] Often had I thought of asking you to do such a thing for me by some opportunity, but, in the new sad circumstances, never had the face. Now that the ice is broken, let me hope you will from time to time continue, and on the whole, keep yourself and me in some kind of mutual visibility with poor Betty, so long as we are all spared to continue here. The world has not many shrines to a devout man at present, and perhaps in our own section of it there are few objects holding more authentically of Heaven and an unseen "better world" than the pious loving soul and patient heavy-laden life of this poor old venerable woman. The love of human creatures one to another, where it is true and unchangeable, often strikes me as a strange fact in their poor history, a kind of perpetual Gospel, revealing itself in them ; sad, solemn, beautiful, the heart and mother of all that can, in any way, ennoble their otherwise mean and contemptible existence in this world.

I am very idle here, very solitary, which I find to be oftenest less miserable to me than the common society that offers. Excepting Froude almost alone, whom I see once a week, there is hardly anybody whose talk, always polite, clear, sharp, and sincere, does me any considerable good. He has an excellent article in the last *Fraser's Magazine*, on "Protestantism," which I think you, if you have not already read it, would read with sympathy.

[1] Mrs. Braid, referred to in page 328.

It is a great evil to me that now I have no work, none worth calling by the name; that I am too weak, too languid, too sad of heart, to be fit for any work, in fact to care sufficiently for any object left me in the world, to think of grappling round it and coercing it by work. A most sorry dog-kennel it oftenest all seems to me, and wise words, if one even had them, to be only thrown away on it. Basta-basta, I for most part say of it, and look with longings towards the still country where at last we and our loved ones shall be together again. Amen, amen.

A sister of mine is with me here for these two months, to help us through the dark hollow of the year; it is the one you saw in Edinburgh, as she right well remembers, I can see. Lady Ashburton is again in Mentone with her child. Adieu, dear friend.—Yours ever,

T. CARLYLE.

The close of February brought another friend to Mr. Erskine's side, who gives this notice of their intercourse:—

REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL TO MRS. MACNABB.

LAUREL BANK, *4th March* 1868.

. . . MR. ERSKINE was better than I expected to find him; and, as usual, I felt more fellowship with him in what seems to be his life, and what I desire may more and more be my own life, than I ever feel with any other man. This notwithstanding of differences in our understanding of many passages of Scripture, and even in our thoughts: —his tendency to reduce many aspects of truth to one making him hesitate to see now the importance, not to say the correctness, of what he once urged; making him, indeed, appear to give up what he once held. I do not believe that his views have at all changed as they appear to himself to have done; and I have urged him to have

his old books read to him, in the expectation that he may receive from his former self, so to speak, strictures upon what he now dwells exclusively on, that he cannot easily receive from another. This, however, I say with no reference to that great distinguishing element in his thoughts, viz., his expectation as to "the restitution of all things" which had a place in him before I knew him: although occupation with the present gospel of remission of sins through the death of Christ for all men, did, in the Row days, and for a considerable time, seem to engross him and be all the gospel he needed. Now he feels that to be but the first element in the gospel, and the hope, into which he sees it expanding, he feels essential to its being to him gospel indeed; while he further sees what is to him implied in the love of God to man manifest in the death of Christ, not only as so implied, but as actually taught by St. Paul, and what we must see in the Epistle to the Romans, if we understand it. Whether he will ever satisfy himself with the adequacy of his own bringing out of the apostle's teaching in the Epistle to the Romans so as to publish it, I know not, but he still labours at this work.[1]

Before the first anniversary of Mrs. Paterson's death came round another of the old Linlathen circle died in London, —his brother's widow. On the 4th March he had written to her:—

264. TO MRS. ERSKINE.

2 FORRES STREET, *4th March* 1868.

BELOVED KATHERINE,—I am afraid from your continued silence that you at least feel disinclined to make any exertion, which indicates weakness, if nothing more. I wish to

[1] The result of these labours was published after Mr. Erskine's death in the volume entitled *The Spiritual Order.*

let you know, however, that I do not cease to think of you, in connection with the past and the future, with memory and hope. I was thinking of your dear mother this morning, and her ready sympathy with any spiritual thought or feeling, and her preparedness for the blessedness of the communion of saints. We can conceive her joy as she advances in acquaintance with the unsearchable riches of Christ, and with the love of God which passeth knowledge. There is a great company, continually increasing, of those who follow the Lamb wheresoever He goeth, from all nations and kindreds, and ours are with them. Since I last wrote to you I have had a visit from dear Maurice, who is most affectionate, and Mrs. Schwabe, and Mr. Campbell, who was with me for a week—a very precious man, a man of much prayer.

I find human kindness a great help to realising the love of God. 'If ye being evil can thus love, how much more will your Father who is perfect in goodness?'

Give my love to any friends whom you may see.—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

Do you sleep tolerably?

Before this letter reached her, Mrs. Erskine had joined the company to which it alludes. "I have not seen much of her lately," Mr. Erskine wrote to one friend, "but she was one of the same class and school as my sisters, and she was faithful in her relations to God and man. She has 'brought up children,' which is one of the special duties of a widow, and she evidently lived much in the presence of God. Her death, though looked forward to by herself as an event which could not be distant, yet was sudden at the last. She appeared as well as usual on Sunday, and she was dead on Wednesday at 5 P.M. She knew the hand that held her, and felt herself safe in it.

The young family that she has been guiding so long will miss her much. Indeed, all who knew her will miss her as a witness for God and a helper of their faith.—Yours, etc., T. ERSKINE."

And to another:—"She was an admirable woman, faithful and diligent in all duties, and unwearied in her efforts to help those who needed her help. I believe also that she was scrupulously conscientious in her own inner walk with God, seeking to bring every thought under subjection to His will, to His love; and she had learned to love."

Of Mr. Erskine's daily drives in the course of this winter one singular memorial has been preserved in a letter to Miss Wedgwood, dated 19th March:—

265. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

2 FORRES STREET, 19*th March* 1868.

FIGLIA MIA,—. . . In my drives I generally go out towards the west, and of course return with my face towards the east. During the winter I was attracted and interested by the frequent recurrence of the same natural phenomenon. The moon rose a little before the sun set, and had just the appearance of a thin bit of fleecy cloud, like a great many others, for in the hazy atmosphere its outline was not at all distinct. I was not looking out for the moon, and so it was often a good while before I identified it as the moon. I saw it simply as a bit of cloud floating about along with many others of a like tissue and even a like form. At last it gradually distinguished itself from the rest by having always the same shape and the same place. It got occasionally covered over or merged in the other fleecy things; but still it never failed to reassert its own individuality. It was evidently a permanent thing amongst changeable

things,—an objective thing amongst subjective things, shall I say? For I felt that these clouds were exhalations from myself (I being the earth), suggestions of my own mind, continually liable to change through the modifications which they suffered from other thoughts; they were all decidedly subjective. At the same time they bore witness not unfrequently to the existence of an objective, just as the clouds bear witness to the existence of the sun by the glory which they receive from him. But I wanted and needed to have the consciousness of the actual presence of the great Objective in me,—not thoughts about Him, but Himself, or at least something which I was sure did not depend upon myself, but would always assert its own distinct independent reality, and which could not possibly be my own imagination, having this personal power and life in it, unmistakeably.

I don't like to go on with this, but I should like to finish it *viva voce* with you. The faculty of blundering grows upon me.—Your ever loving, T. ERSKINE.

When you see Mrs. Rich, embrace her for me. She has known most of those whom I have chiefly loved in this world, and that is itself an immense boon. I hope to write to her and to Mrs. Batten and to Emily soon.

Give my loving regards to your own mother.

The idea so picturesquely presented here was put into a kindred shape in a letter addressed a month afterwards

266. TO BISHOP EWING.

2 FORRES STREET, 16*th April.*

. . . THE revelation is both objective and subjective. Christ was the objective revelation of the Father; but we need the subjective revelation, which consists not in taking a veil off the Father, but in removing the scales from our

own eyes. Perhaps the objective revelation is contained in the subjective. To them who are without, who are living in the flesh, all things must necessarily be in parables.

I sympathise, however, with the demand for a complete objectivity in God. The shadow within me must always keep its character of shadow, leading me to look outwards for the substance. I desire to know God as really (and far more) as I know a man. It is not merely by any thoughts of Him that I am to be comforted and strengthened (though I expect and find comfort and strength from such thoughts); I desire and expect an actual putting forth of His own hand, a direct breathing of His own love upon me. It is said in Deuteronomy that Moses died by the word of the Lord. The Hebrew for *word* also means *mouth*, and hence also *kiss;* so the Jewish tradition is that Moses died by the kiss of God. This is something more than knowing God is love; and I should like to receive all the sorrows and pains of life, as it were, by the kiss of God.

My dear Bishop, I have done you little service by this letter;[1] but receive it lovingly, as from a friend who loves you—a friend who would pray and hope before long to die by the kiss of God.

Affectionate regards to Lady Alice. T. ERSKINE.

It was to the same correspondent that Mr. Erskine at this time wrote:—

267. TO BISHOP EWING.

I LOOK with great sadness on the fading away in so many minds of the Christianity of our childhood. Take the

[1] A greater service had already been rendered. Writing to Mr. Erskine seven years before this time, Bishop Ewing says:—"I owe you more, dear sir, than to any man alive. I owe you belief in God,—in God as my and our true Friend and Father."—*Memoirs*, p. 327.

great mass of minds in whom it is fading, can we in any sense say that it is like the vanishing of narrow Judaism before the early dawn of the gospel?—the phase which St. Paul saw and has so vividly pictured to us. It seems to me we are more and more coming to this issue—Has God revealed Himself to us as one whose "ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts"? or, Do we evolve out of our own inward light the existence of One who personifies our own highest conceptions of moral good?

For my own part, I am deeply thankful to the Calvinian atmosphere one has insensibly breathed from childhood for predisposing the mind in favour of the first, although by its unscriptural excesses unhappily contributing to the spreading reaction in favour of the latter. T. ERSKINE.

268. TO THE SAME.

2 FORRES STREET, EDINBURGH, *May* 26, 1868.

MR. CAMPBELL came here yesterday to attend a great dinner given to Dr. Wylie of Carluke, on the fiftieth anniversary of his ministerial appointment to that parish. I went with Mr. Campbell, and Mr. Story of Roseneath was the proposer of a toast, in which Mr. Campbell's name and mine were joined, and received honourable treatment from the proposer, who is a very able man, and who seems very anxious to make the Church of Scotland understand the sin and blunder she committed in regard to Mr. Campbell thirty-eight years ago. It would be a right thing for her to rescind her act of deposition even now, if she really sinned in passing that act. Dr. Norman Macleod was expected at the dinner, but he did not come. His brother was there, whom I like very much.

All that class of men condemn the deposition of Mr. Campbell. And yet I believe that neither in the Church of

Scotland nor in the Church of England is the root of the question then agitated understood to this day.

Is a man to become a child of God, or is a man a child of God in virtue of his being a man? What is the meaning of the name of God proclaimed to Moses?—"The Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, without clearing the guilty." An inexhaustible love which punishes, because the purposes of love can no otherwise be accomplished. A love which eternally desires our sympathy because such sympathy must be our holiness and blessedness, is the nature of God, and the explanation of all His dealings with us.—Ever yours,

T. Erskine.

One of the earliest letters of 1869 was addressed to Mr. Carlyle, from whom came the following remarkable reply:—

MR. CARLYLE TO MR. ERSKINE.

Chelsea, 12*th Feb.* 1869.

Dear Mr. Erskine,—I was most agreeably surprised by the sight of your handwriting again, so kind, so welcome! The letters are as firm and honestly distinct as ever;—the mind too, in spite of its frail *environments*, as clear, *plumb-up*, calmly expectant, as in the best days: right so; *so* be it with us all, till we quit this dim sojourn, now grown so lonely to us, and our change come! "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name, Thy will be done;"—what else can we say? The other night, in my sleepless tossings about, which were growing more and more miserable, these words, that brief and grand Prayer, came strangely into my mind, with an altogether new emphasis; as if *written*, and shining for me in mild pure splendour, on the black bosom of the Night there;

when I, as it were, *read* them word by word,—with a sudden check to my imperfect wanderings, with a sudden softness of composure which was much unexpected. Not for perhaps thirty or forty years had I once formally repeated that Prayer;—nay, I never felt before how intensely the voice of Man's soul it is; the inmost aspiration of all that is high and pious in poor Human Nature; right worthy to be recommended with an "After this manner pray ye."

I am very thankful that you went to see poor Betty; she is one of the most venerable human figures now known to me in the world. I called there, the first thing after my bit of surgery in the neighbourhood, end of July last; I seemed to have only one other *visit* to make in all Scotland,—and I made only *one*. The sight of poor Betty, mournful as it is, and full of mournfullest memories to me, always does me good. So far as I could any way learn, she is well enough in her humble thrifty *economics*, etc.: if otherwise at any time, I believe you understand that help from this quarter would be a *sacred* duty to me.

I am still able to walk, though I do it on compulsion merely, and without pleasure except as in work *done*. It is a great sorrow that *you* now get fatigued so soon, and have not your old privilege in this respect;—I only hope you perhaps do not quite so indispensably need it as I; with me it is the key to *sleep*, and in fact the one medicine (often ineffectual, and now gradually oftener) that I ever could discover for this poor clay tabernacle of mine. I still keep working, after a weak sort; but can now do little, often almost nothing;—all my little "work" is henceforth *private* (as I calculate); a setting of my poor house in order; which I would fain finish *in time*, and occasionally fear I shan't. Dear Mr. Erskine, good be ever with you. Were my hand *as little* shaky as it is to-day, I would write

to you oftener. A word *from* you will ever be welcome here!—Yours sincerely and much, T. CARLYLE.

269. TO THOMAS CARLYLE, ESQ.

9 ALBYN PLACE, 19*th March* 1869.

DEAR MR. CARLYLE,—Since ever I received your last letter I have had a desire to thank you for it. I felt it to be a word in season, a word of comfort and hope, to which I was thankful to find myself able to respond. Assuredly it is a great deliverance from the bleak solitude of life, and from its weary turnings and tossings, to discover that we have ever within our reach One without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground, to whom we can say "Our Father which art in heaven" with any assurance that He really regards us as His children, and has the purpose of training us into a participation of His own character, by all that path of life which He appoints for us. And I do indeed feel that the petitions with which the prayer commences express the deepest aspirations of man's being, the principles in which it would be his righteousness and blessedness to live. There seems as if there were a power in the very words to quiet the troubled spirit, and if we at all succeed in realising the embracing presence of Him whom we call our Father, we cannot fail of finding ourselves helped and comforted and lifted up into a holier and purer atmosphere. —Dear Mr. Carlyle, yours with much regard,

T. ERSKINE.

270. TO MISS WEDGWOOD.

9 ALBYN PLACE, 13*th March* 1869.

WELL-BELOVED S.,—The sight of your handwriting is always agreeable to me, and it is more especially so at this time, coming as it does from Maurice's house. Your

report of him, however, is not very satisfactory. I am afraid that he has actually worn himself out.

To my mind a thought is valuable in proportion to its capacity of becoming more precious the longer I know it. I always expect to understand his books better on a second reading, and to find out more of their secret—for every man has a secret, something which distinguishes him from every other human being. It is that critical character of your mind which demands novelty; it is like that taste which would require a different dinner every day in the year. I wish I had some book to read. I have been trying some of De Tocqueville, which makes me like the man very much.

I heard Keble's Life read, but I felt it waterish. The entire want of any theology provokes me. Give my loving regards to your host.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

We have had Jowett here lecturing[1] and preaching.

271. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL, D.D.

9 ALBYN PLACE, *5th April* 1869.

BELOVED FRIEND,—I have had much pleasure in reading the *Spectator's* review of your "Bread of Life," which will, doubtless, introduce it to the acquaintance of many, and I feel assured that very few works published in our day are fitted to give more help to their readers. I have had it read over to me in its new form, with increased satisfaction. I am particularly struck by the parallelism which you indicate between the mass and imputed righteousness in the respective places which they hold in the minds of Romanists and Calvinists. But I like it chiefly on account

[1] Mr. Jowett delivered two Lectures on Education before the Members of the Philosophical Institution.

of the help it gives to those who are desiring to feed on the bread which came down from heaven. That is what I desire for myself and my brethren, that thus we may be continually growing into a greater conformity to our Father's will, growing in filial trust and love and joy, for I believe in the truth of the word, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." I need this very much, and I desire to give God the glory of rejoicing in Him, and to be delivered from the weakness which the want of that joy produces. There is a great deal in the 119th Psalm which expresses either what I feel, or seek to feel. "Thou art my portion, O Lord," "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments." I know that He is very nigh me, and that He hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." You do not forget me in your prayers. Give my love to . . . .—Ever affectionately yours, T. ERSKINE.

272. TO THE REV. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL, D.D.

127 GEORGE STREET, 18*th May* 1869.

DEAR MR. CAMPBELL,—It is indeed most interesting to think that you are to spend your remaining days on the banks of the Gareloch, and specially on the Roseneath side, which still remains as a type of ideal beauty in my memory.

I wonder whether the Church of Scotland will not at last take the step of reponing you, when the Glasgow University confers the degree of D.D. on you, and you are invited as an honoured guest at the Moderator's dinner. Most of your prosecutors are either dead or in the Free Church, and the obligation of the Confession of Faith on the consciences of clergy as well as of laity is much relaxed. . . .

273. TO LADY AUGUSTA STANLEY.

127 GEORGE STREET, 15*th June* 1869.

BELOVED LADY,—The remembrance of the reviving visit of you and the Dean is most pleasant to me, especially when connected with the hope of its repetition, before very long. I have sent you a photograph of Madame Vernet, which I think you will like as a Swiss pendant to Lady Christian Erskine, and as a discovery of the antecedents of Madame de Staël. She had the breadth of our Cardross friends in the higher cultivation and refinement, but without their humour, which, however was not missed in her. There are some people who seem complete without it, and she was one of them.

Tell the Dean that I have been hearing Bright's Speeches read with great interest and admiration. I wonder whether he is a man really and sincerely desirous of doing what is right, and whether the frequent introduction of such words as humanity and justice and Christianity indicates something real in his heart and conscience. I have thought this night a good deal about the House of Lords, and what course they may choose for themselves. They cannot throw out the Bill without doing harm, and I trust that even those of them who may see an abstract rightness in doing so will yet make allowance for the hardness of the hearts of the people.—Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

274. TO DEAN STANLEY.

127 GEORGE ST., EDINBURGH, 17*th June* 1869.

MY DEAR DEAN,—I have been listening to the speech of the Bishop of Peterborough, and though my own mind had been to a considerable degree made up as to the general

rightness of the Bill, I yet could not refuse the consent both of my reason and conscience to much which he said. I do not believe that with the modifications which it is sure to undergo, before it becomes law, it will conciliate either the Catholic priesthood or laity, and there can be no doubt that the Protestants, to a man, must feel themselves aggrieved, and they would like that England should be taught to know how much she has owed to them in time past, and how she was now slighting those through whose faithful adherence she had the firmest hold of Ireland. There must be left some establishment and endowment, else in the rural districts, the support of the clergy being thrown on the landed proprietors, an inferior class of men would almost certainly be introduced, and lower the general standard both of Christian character and intelligence amongst the people. It is a very grave question, which must be considered not only in the *large*, but in all its *details*, in order to its being rightly judged. . . . Any man who meets this question simply as the member of a party ought to be hanged forthwith. . . .—Very truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

PROFESSOR LORIMER TO DR. HANNA.

1 BRUNTSFIELD CRESCENT, 20*th Feb.* 1877.

MY DEAR DR. HANNA,—You ask me to tell you the particulars of the interesting meeting between Mr. Erskine and Monsieur Prévost-Paradol at which I had the privilege to be present, and I shall do so most willingly, so far as I can remember them. It came about in this wise. In the winter of 1869 the Directors of the Philosophical Institution wished M. Paradol to lecture to them on the social and political aspects of French Society, in which he then played so conspicuous a part, and, as from a variety of causes, to which I need not refer, I was in the habit of

corresponding with him, they requested me to arrange the matter for them.

I gladly embraced the opportunity of making his personal acquaintance, and invited him to pay us a visit. When he was staying in my house I took him to call on Mr. Erskine. then certainly one of the most remarkable and interesting men in Edinburgh. Strangely different as they were, I felt that they would sympathise, and I knew that they had many subjects of common interest. I introduced M. Paradol as a friend of the De Broglies, who could give Mr. Erskine the latest news of the circle of friends to whom he was bound by so many associations. For a time Mr. Erskine talked to him about the old days at Coppet, and his recollections of Madame de Staël. Very soon, however, as his wont was, he diverged into the subjects which continually occupied his thoughts, and he did so in a manner which at first was somewhat startling. "As a member of the liberal party, M. Paradol," he said, "your religious opinions are probably not of a very positive kind." M. Paradol assured him, in a very reverential tone, that his religious point of view was less negative than that of many of his countrymen, and that if his creed was not very definite he held it very sincerely. Mr. Erskine's face lighted up with that expression of sublime earnestness which every one who knew him must remember. He felt that he had a sympathetic listener, whose position enabled him, if he chose, to carry his message where it was much needed, and to proclaim it in words that would be listened to, and he determined not to miss his opportunity.

He poured out to him his own deep and simple faith; he cleared away the needless superfluities with which tradition and dogmatism have obscured Christianity; and told him that pretty nearly all that Christ Himself had enjoined on us was that we should love God. "Love God,"

he repeated over and over again, "that is about the whole of it." I cannot of course recall what he said, and if I could it would be needless to you. It was the doctrine he taught us all; but I, who knew him much less than you did, never heard him put it with so much power and simplicity. Paradol was very much struck with it, and with the man altogether. He did not know what to make of him. When we got down into the street he was eloquent in his expressions of his wonder and admiration. I had told him before who he was, but he insisted on hearing it over again. That he was a member of the Bar who had succeeded to a good family estate, and that his "two books" were Plato and the Bible, was all that I could tell him. He was bewildered and awe-struck at the appearance of a personage so far elevated above the negative and colourless conception which he had formed of an English country gentleman. He was so simple, so considerate, and even indulgent, and yet he was so dignified and authoritative, and he dismissed him with something so like an apostolic benediction that he could not get over it. When he left us a few days after on the pier of Leith—for, unlike a Frenchman, he went up to London in mid-winter by sea,—he thanked me specially for taking him to see "that kind of old prophet." After Mr. Erskine's death he wrote me the letter which I send you. It was one of the last which I received from him, and as it will interest a wider circle than that to which Mr. Erskine was known, you may perhaps like to publish it.—Yours most truly,

J. Lorimer.

M. PARADOL TO PROFESSOR LORIMER.

Paris, *Wednesday, April 6th.*

My dear Lorimer,—I am very thankful for your kind letter, and also for the interesting papers which you have

sent to me. The *Scotsman* and the *Spectator* on our admirable Erskine were most welcome, and I have remarked in the *Spectator* a letter which I am inclined to attribute to you. We have had and we have still here many good and even religious men, but what is rare and original, quite Scotch and anti-French, is a life so unearthly and spiritual as that of Erskine spent out of the Church; when a man is religious here, he is either a member of the clergy or an outside political rather than religious defender, like our Montalembert and Falloux. I am happy to learn that you are well; we are still in the uncertainty here about everything, as well as about my own affairs. Afraid of electoral reforms, and of electoral agitation, the Emperor and his ministry have thrown themselves into the plebiscite absurdity and the constituent agitation, which is a dreadful mess, still more puzzling and dangerous than the Pechey injustice.—With my best love to all, believe me ever yours sincerely, P. PARADOL.

275. TO MRS. MACHAR.

EDINBURGH, *Feb.* 1, 1870.

THERE are few living now whose words are so welcome to my heart as yours, and in whose hopes and sorrows I feel such a readiness to sympathise. I am become very weak in body, and have probably a good deal of suffering before me, but my chief burden is the remembrance of past sins. Although I believe them forgiven, yet they often come between me and the face of my heavenly Father. I do not doubt His love, but I desire to have a more living sense of it. I would say to Him, "Be not silent to me." "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." I need the Holy Spirit to quicken my cold affections, and to help me to apprehend what is contained in the unspeakable gift of Christ. The assurance that "God afflicteth not willingly,

but for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness," is a great support. He brought us into being that He might educate us into the likeness of His own Son. This is, I believe, His unchangeable purpose concerning us all, a blessed purpose surely; and when we think of the manifestation of His purpose, Jesus Christ, we can scarcely conceive anything lower or less to be intended. This is a rest.—Yours, etc., T. ERSKINE.

This letter was written a short time before his death. The answer to it was read to him only ten days before the close, and was the last letter, save a note from Professor Lushington, which he was able to listen to.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Close.

During the spring and summer of 1868 Mr. Erskine's health had on the whole improved. There was one short but solemn interruption. He was suddenly threatened with a malady which he knew must, if unchecked, terminate quickly and painfully in death. He faced the likelihood with a calmness and courage the more remarkable that he shrank from pain, and had always a dread of the act of dying. "I should not like to die," he had once said to a friend, "in a frenzy of pain, all the decencies of a death-bed lost sight of in physical agony." Now this seemed impending. As his niece Mrs. Paterson sat by him reading those parts of the Bible which he indicated, and while he awaited the effect of the treatment, he said to her, "It is a very solemn pause, but I can trust Him absolutely. Still, I should have liked my death not to have been a painful one, but to have passed away with my door open and my friends coming in and out." The treatment was successful, the malady was checked,—but these words were remembered when the last illness came, when all was done, and done successfully, to carry out his desire.

Soon as any capacity for work returned he was once more at his writings, aided alternately by his two most competent and devoted lady friends. By his residing latterly so much in Edinburgh, the ties of an early friend-

ship with his cousin George Dundas (Lord Manor) had been drawn closer. They were seeing each other daily, when death suddenly stept in and took his friend from his side, —a loss felt by Mr. Erskine deeply, and felt to the end. There was yet another parting, with his dear friend James Mackenzie, who died a few months later. The last meeting here was singularly impressive to those who witnessed it. Mr. Mackenzie was just dying; he sat in bed with eyes closed, insensible, his head laid back upon the pillow, his silver locks floating as in a pale light over his forehead, his finely chiselled features, always beautiful, now set in the marble beauty of death. Sent for to bid him a last adieu, Mr. Erskine paused as he entered the room, stood for a few moments absorbed, gazing upon the sight, then gently approached, put his lips to those of the dying, and, not a word spoken, withdrew. Coming down to the dining-room to his niece, who had accompanied him, "he looked round the room," she tells us, "as if saying good-bye to it too, then told me of the gentle leave-taking, saying with that peculiar and tender smile he always had for James Mackenzie, 'his death is lovely, like himself.'"

For many months at this period Mr. Erskine suffered from an affection of the heart which gave rise not only to great bodily discomfort, but to much mental depression. At times, when under this depression, a conscience always very sensitive magnified some trivial fancied offences of the past till he became most unhappy in the retrospect. Those who saw him at such times, and listened to his bitter self-condemnation, might have misjudged, as if his faith in God, his trust in his Saviour, his confidence in the largeness of the divine love, had misgiven. Nothing was further from the truth. Never, not in his hours of greatest darkness, did he doubt or distrust his God and Saviour, or feel uncertainty as to his personal relationship

with Him. It was but the action of a diseased sensibility. This was manifested in the most striking manner at the close, when the burden and pressure of disease were removed.

On Thursday the 10th of March 1870 he drove out as usual into the country. He looked admiringly on the opening buds,—"swelling into life," he said, "just as he was passing out of it." His niece, who accompanied him, reminded him that his sister, as she watched it from her window at Morningside, used to call spring that "yearly miracle." "Yes," he said, "I am not passing out of life; the great miracle of entrance into fuller life is near—very near perhaps." He then asked Keble's Morning Hymn to be repeated, going before at times, and saying at the close, "I forgot it was so beautiful." That evening he was calm, though silent. During the night he had more sleep than usual, and slept quietly. But at breakfast-time a cough brought up some blood. He had suddenly broken a blood-vessel. The relief to head and heart was immediate, but he felt that his hours were numbered. "There was something majestic," Mrs. Paterson tells us,[1] "in his look and tone," as he sat up in bed taking, as he thought, his last farewells of those around. "You must not try to keep me," he said quite cheerfully, but solemnly. But when Dr. John Brown, who came in as he repeated the words, said, "You will take this, dear sir; *we* cannot keep you when God sends for you," Mr. Erskine answered, "You are right; give it me, I will wait His time." Then presently he said to the doctor, with a touch of his old humour, "I am better now,—if you had not given me that!" then added solemnly, "His time." "*Thy* time, O

[1] The narrative which follows is derived from full and interesting records preserved by his niece and by Miss Gourlay, who, along with his nephew, were his close and loving attendants by night and by day on till the close.

Lord." All that day the relieved heart seemed to leave his spirit free, and the grand calm, and the loving messages to his relations, remembering each, and suiting the message to each, were wonderful.

Turning in the course of the day to Miss Gourlay, he said to her, "I want the paper in the tin box—the one on Education and Probation—to be printed separately as a tract, and I want it to be prefaced by these words: 'This principle of Education lies at the very basis of the Gospel, for it contains in it, or expresses, the everlasting purpose of God towards us, to make us partakers of His own righteousness.'" [1]

Sunday the 13th.—Between services the Rev. Mr. Sandford came and administered the Holy Communion. His nephew and niece and Miss Gourlay partook of it along with him. He watched as Mr. Sandford went up to each, evidently praying for them. With folded hands, and following the service with deep feeling, he received the Sacrament, saying at the close, "Oh wonderful! my Lord and my God!"

In the evening his kind friend Dr. John Brown came in, for the fourth or fifth time. Mr. Erskine brightened up and said, "Well, here I am still, you see." Dr. Brown said that many were anxiously asking for him, and "just now I have been talking about you with Lushington." "Ah, Lushington," he said, with a smile, and then repeated a Greek sentence.[2] We asked the meaning: "Not only Nature's finest workmanship, but made of Nature's finest clay. My loving farewell to him."

Monday the 14th.—All day very peaceful. Several friends came in at his "open door," and for each he had just the right word.

[1] See Appendix, No. V.

[2] Mr. Lushington was Professor of Greek in the University of Glasgow.

Tuesday the 15th.—A day of much bodily uneasiness. Throughout indeed there was much physical restlessness. His position had to be shifted frequently, and many little services to be rendered. When some of these were not rendered as promptly or as efficiently as he desired, his patience for the moment failed, but, instantly recovering, with the utmost grace he craved forgiveness.

Often and often did he say to those who were trying to soothe his bodily sufferings, "I am very grateful. I am very much obliged. I thank you all for Jesus Christ's sake." Frequently on such occasions one or other of the two passages was repeated. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him," and "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." "Wonderful words," he added as he recited the last of these verses—"what exquisite beauty in them—what tenderness!"

Wednesday and Thursday.—Less restlessness, and always the same steadfast trust, calm peace, and holy joy. Whispered words coming ever and anon from his lips, almost always words of Holy Scripture—very seldom his own—and so long as strength lasted, he repeated each verse from beginning to end. Among those most frequently thus repeated were—"God so loved the world," etc.; "God commended His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" "He tasted death for every man;" "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin;" "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him;" "Fear not, for I am with thee," etc.; "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me;" "Though I

walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me," etc.

The Psalms were much upon his lips. For more than fifty years they had been his daily study and delight, the cadence of many of their well-known verses the softest, sublimest music to his ear. And now they refreshed his soul in death. The 20th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 31st, 32d, 62d, 73d, 86th, 103d, 116th, 130th, and 139th were special favourites; recited by himself with deep solemnity of tone, or, when voice failed, listened to and re-echoed as repeated to him by others.

The Sonship and the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ were now much in his thoughts. "Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus Christ," he said over and over again, in such a tone of earnest reverence, love, and tenderness, as if a new revelation of the meaning and preciousness of the Incarnation had been given. The Divine Sonship was contemplated as embodied in the person of Christ. "Jesus, the Son of God," he was heard to whisper to himself, "*and* God;" the peculiar emphasis laid upon the *and* indicating the current of his thoughts. "Say words of God to me," he once said. In answer to his request, the words which for weeks before had been often upon his own lips, were repeated—"This is My body, broken for you," etc. He listened and was satisfied; very marked throughout his selection of those verses which speak of the death of our Redeemer and its results. And running through the whole was the close direct sustained communion with God, breaking forth in expressions like these:—"God, my God; I can trust Him utterly." "O Lord God, heavenly Father, my heavenly Father, I am in Thy hands." "O Lord, how long? Grant me Thy patience, keep not silence." "O Lord, my soul longs after Thee." "I desire to do Thy will—yes, living or dying to be the Lord's." "Holy

glorious God! let me see Thy face—my Lord and my God!"

Being laid for the night he said, "I want to be left alone; I want to have my dealings with God; I want *that* to be done with first. *Done* with! it's *never* done with; but I mean—" there the voice failed. He put himself evidently to sleep with a sort of command to himself, "Be still and know that I am God."

Friday the 18th.—In the course of the day his nephew writes to Miss Wedgwood—

"My dear uncle is still here, and though not *suffering*, it is a long weary death, but most peaceful and trustful. I wish you were here to see it, and get a loving look and word. If many loved him in his life, more would love him in his death. *All* his words, conscious or unconscious, are expressions of love to God and man, without a cloud. His very tones are so gentle and loving. As he has spoken much in all states of consciousness and unconsciousness, you see *all* that is in him, and I believe it might be said, 'God saw that it was good.'

"May our last end be like his. . . ."

Leaving him for the night his niece kissed him, as she thought probably for the last time. Repeating her name, he said, "Beloved, love to your uncle. All's well," and then fell asleep.

"A loving farewell to your uncle" had been the first words addressed to Mrs. Paterson on the preceding Friday, when death seemed imminent, and he was bidding adieu to those around. Day after day—again and again—he sent messages to his friend—"Dear Mr. Campbell, my gratitude to him—beloved Mr. Campbell." And now upon Friday the 18th, three different times when life seemed fluttering into death, his niece caught the words addressed to her, "Farewell—beloved—love to your uncle."

Nor was it by direct messages alone that it appeared how present his absent friend was to his thoughts. As they were once raising him in his bed he said—"Do it gently—with the gentleness of God. Be very gentle with me. There's Mr. Campbell, dear Mr. Campbell, he's always faithful, but so gentle. Try to be gentle, with holy gentleness."

Saturday the 19th.—To the same friend in London to whom her husband had written, Mrs. Paterson now writes:—

"We wish you could have had some of the comfort of hearing some of the *calm* (I would say manly) words of those last days, and of seeing the brow gradually widen as *every ruffle* passed away for days before the end, and the loving tone and *grateful* acknowledgment of our efforts to soothe the distress of the body. . . .

"All these sweet human touches were very precious, and then the marvellous entrance into such steadfast, simple trust, and the strange inner clearness of spirit and constant sleeping-and-waking communion with his God. . . ."

Sunday the 20th.—At two o'clock in the morning he called Miss Gourlay three times by name. Looking at her as she came, distinctly and very solemnly he said, "I am done, everything is *done*—for me—with this outward life—this *outward* life; but I have *perfect* confidence and *perfect* hope for the eternal life. Will you try to do what you can . . . for me . . . put . . . in order . . ." He meant his papers.

Two days before, while seeming to be asleep, there had issued from his lips, "My beloved mother—my dear, dear brother—my beloved Davie—my beloved Christian."

And now in a sweet, clear, musical voice he called out "Christian, sister!" Already were the broken ties of the past being revived and re-formed.

In the evening Dr. Brown came in. He looked at him with a half smile and welcome recognition. "You there!" he said. "Yes," replied Dr. Brown; "I will stay with you." "To the end," Mr. Erskine added. He was raised upon the pillows, and folded his hands in prayer. At intervals were heard—"O Lord my God . . . Jesus . . . Jesus Christ . . . love . . . the peace of God . . . for ever and ever, for Jesus' sake, Amen and Amen." Then there was a silence, a change passed over his face, there were long intermissions between the breaths, but no struggle, no appearance of suffering; at last one long gentle sigh, like that of a wearied infant dropping asleep, —one last breath, and he was gone.

The countenance became very beautiful after death. It seemed to lengthen, and the wrinkles and marks of suffering and conflict which had made it rugged all passed away. Through the whole of that last week there was a nobility in it, a look of calm patriarchal dignity, of peaceful gentle patience, waiting till his time came, a striking realisation of his own conception of what the last moments of earthly life ought to be.

Next morning Dr. Brown wrote—

"Our dear sweet-hearted friend is away. He died very gently last night at a quarter to ten, laid his pathetic weary head on the pillow like a child, and his last words were 'Lord Jesus.'"

Dr. Campbell, to whom his niece had been sending daily bulletins, wrote thus a few days afterwards to his sons:—

"My beloved Mr. Erskine died last Sunday evening. A time of comparative ease and freedom from suffering, combined with great weakness and occasional symptoms that seemed to himself and to those around him to intimate the close, spread the consciousness of a death-bed over so many days and nights that to him and

to them, and to us to whom there was a letter almost every day, it has been a *prolonged parting;* giving occasion for oft-repeated utterances of his faith and hope and love, which are to us all memories of our latest communion with him here, which solemnly and most sweetly connect what we remember as his past life among us with our hope for that on which he has now entered: our hope, as his hope, being an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, having its hold within the veil."

Few have ever passed away from among their fellows of whom so large a number of those who knew him best, and were most competent to judge, would have said, as they did of Mr. Erskine, that he was the best, the holiest man they ever knew,—the man most human yet most divine, with least of the stains of earth, with most of the spirit of heaven; the man in whom the ideal of his own favourite poet stood in every feature realised:—

> "I'm apt to think the man
> That could surround the sum of things, and spy
> The heart of God and secrets of His Empire,
> Would speak but love—with him the bright result
> Would change the hue of intermediate scenes
> And make one thing of all theology."
>
> GAMBOLD.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Reminiscences by Principal Shairp.

My dear Dr. Hanna,—You have often urged me to attempt some connected narrative of the life and character of our revered friend, the late Mr. Erskine of Linlathen, and I have often myself felt a strong desire to do so. But as soon as the desire has arisen, I have been restrained by a sense of utter inability. I felt the truth of those words which Dr. Macleod Campbell wrote to Bishop Ewing soon after Mr. Erskine's death: 'No man is able to say to those who knew him not what he was; no man could say this to those who knew him in a way that they would feel satisfying.' All that I shall now attempt is to put together such recollections of him as I can give, in the hope that these may be found to be in keeping with the impression made by those delightful letters which you are publishing.

Although it was as a spiritual teacher working by voice and pen that Mr. Erskine was known to the world, yet one cannot fully understand his mind and influence without taking some account of his human temperament and earthly circumstances. In him, hardly less than in more mundane characters, the race from which he came, and the people who surrounded his childhood, had much to do with making him what he ultimately became. He himself would have been one of the last to underrate what

he owed to his ancestry. On either side he was sprung from a far-descended and gracious race, and among these, his kindred, he passed a childhood and youth sheltered from those early shocks and jars which probably lie at the root of much of the unkindness and asperity there is in the world. Equally on his father's and his mother's side he came from what the late biographer of Walter Scott used to call, with so much satisfaction, 'a fine old Scottish family.' Often of a winter evening, as with one or two guests Mr. Erskine drew in his chair round the dining-room fire at Linlathen, he would look up to the family pictures that hung round the room, and tell their history, and remark on their characters. When he looked at the portrait of 'the Black Colonel,' as he was called, partly from his swarthy complexion, perhaps too from the dark armour in which he is encased, he would speak of him with a peculiar twinkle in his eye and a humorous smile on his face. Among the virtues you have attributed to the Black Colonel, that bulwark of Presbyterianism, there is one you have omitted,—his great love of litigation. His great-grandson, however, used to tell how on his death-bed he is reported to have said, 'Haena I thretty gude ga'in pleas on hand, and that fule Jock will hae compounded them a' a fortnicht after I'm dead!' That 'fule Jock' was his son, the great Scottish jurist, author of the *Institutes*. His picture hangs near his father's, and his pale chiselled refined features form a striking contrast to the broad swarthy pugnative visage of the Black Colonel. Mr. Erskine would also dwell lovingly on an excellent copy by Urquhart of Raeburn's beautiful picture of a refined old lady's face. This was the portrait of the Hon. Christian Mackay, daughter of the third Lord Reay, which hung beside that of her grave earnest husband, Dr. John Erskine, minister of Greyfriars,

who was Mr. Erskine's uncle. In the late Raeburn Exhibition in Edinburgh the original of this picture of Christian Mackay was regarded as one of the finest of the many fine old-lady portraits by that great artist. He would also speak of the strong homely sense mingled with genial yet refined humanity that looked out from the face of Lady Christian Bruce, the wife of his uncle James, the laird of Cardross. Most of the pictures that hung round that dining-room belonged to his father's side of the house.

Of his maternal ancestors, though there was but one picture on the wall, the images dwelt no less vividly in his heart. At Airth Castle, his mother's home, the happiest days of his childhood were spent. The old Lady of Airth, his maternal grandmother, you have yourself well described, reading her English-Church service every Sunday to her family in her own drawing-room, while the Presbyterian worship was going on in the kirk, which then stood hard by the Castle. The old place of Airth is one deeply to impress itself on a young imagination.

Out of the carse of Falkirk, that great dead level plain that stretches from Falkirk to Stirling, which, as the great battle-field of Scotland, holds in Scottish history, as Dean Stanley has suggested, the same place which the plain of Esdraelon held in the history of Israel,—out of that carse, about a mile inland from the Links of Forth, rises a scarpment or ridge of sandstone abruptly breaking from the surrounding flats. On the edge of that scarpment stands the old castle, originally a square peel tower with pent-house roof, like those common all over Scotland. To that tower has been built on a long high line of building, with crow-stepped gables, a steep roof, and dormer windows projecting from it. This range of building forms the later dwelling-house,—all that was there in Mr. Erskine's childhood; though since then there have been

made quite modern and not very congruous additions. This long building, flanked on the west by the older tower, looks down, over a small precipice, on a quaint garden beneath, and beyond the garden are old trees and a lazy stream lingering towards the Forth. The house fronts southward, and across the dead level carse the windows look far away to the rising ground of Falkirk muir, the scene of two great battles. Contiguous to the house, on the north-east side, is the old churchyard, full of ancient graves and grey tombstones. A church must once have stood there, but it has disappeared. Behind the house, to north and west, long straight avenues and park trees stretch on toward the grounds of Dunmore Park. It is almost an ideal abode of an ancient Scottish family, like those Walter Scott loved to picture. Such outwardly was the place and neighbourhood where Thomas Erskine drank in his first impressions of a world in which he was to abide for fourscore years. For the associations of a mere town house in childhood go for little compared with those of the first country home.

The inside of Airth Castle was warm to him with much loving-kindness and old-fashioned yet refined simplicity. The old servant, himself quite a part of the family, who spent his whole lifetime at Airth, lives in Dean Ramsay's well-known story about Mrs. Moray of Abercairney and the salt-spoon,—a story, by the way, with which Mr. Erskine furnished the Dean. But to that quaint example of

"The constant service of the antique world,"

Dean Ramsay has not added one pathetic incident with which Mr. Erskine used to accompany it. That old family man-servant, John Campbell, lived to see Mrs. Graham's eldest son, the heir of the house, go to India in his country's service. Years after, the ship which was ex-

pected to bring him back to England, brought the news of his death. On the day when the new mourning suit which John was to wear for his young master's death was laid down on the table before him, he fainted away. That kind of faithful affection in a domestic servant, common enough at the beginning of this century, has become rarer now-a-days.

Airth, Kippenross, Keir, Ochtertyre, Cardross, with occasional visits to Ardoch, his grandmother's home, and to Abercairney,—the summers of childhood and boyhood spent in these melted into him with associations of beauty and ancestral repose which were indelible, and the warm atmosphere of human life that then surrounded him, sweetened his whole nature to the core. It had no doubt much to do with drawing out that deep and tender affectionateness which made him all life through the much-loving and much-beloved man he was.

In this he was very unlike most men. Hearts more or less, I suppose, most of us have, but we keep them so close-cased and padlocked, we wear an outside so hard or dry, that little or none of the love that may be within escapes to gladden those around us. And so life passes without any of the sweetening to society that comes when affection is not only felt but expressed,—for to be of any use to others it must be expressed in some way. Mr. Erskine was in this happy above most men, that, being gifted with a heart more than usually tender and sympathetic, he had brought with him from childhood the art of expressing it simply and naturally. So it was that the loving-kindness that was in him streamed freely forth, making the happy happier, and lightening the load of the sorrowful. It was as if inside his man's understanding he hid, as it were, a woman's heart. And though this is a thing no early training could have implanted, yet when it

was there, the warm affection that surrounded his boyhood was the very atmosphere to cherish and expand it.

If this had been all, it might have led to softness, but the society of his childhood, though based on affection, had enough of the old Scottish verve and intellect in it to keep it from degenerating into sentimentalism. His own busy intellect too was early stirring, and the winter home of his mother in St. David Street was pervaded by that old-world simplicity and frugality which is so bracing to character. Besides, even if the boy's early years had been too tenderly nurtured, school life, as it then existed, especially in the rough old High School of Edinburgh, was sure to give scope enough for the hardy virtues.

Although I had long known Mr. Erskine by reputation and through mutual friends, it was not till the year 1854 that I became personally acquainted with him. As I happened to be in Scotland in the winter of that year, his cousin Miss Jane Stirling wrote to him that I was anxious to meet him, and he at once invited me to visit him at Linlathen.

It was, I think, on a Saturday afternoon, the 7th of January in that year, that he received me in that library at Linlathen which his friends so well remember. I had not been any time with him before he opened on those subjects which lay always deepest in his thoughts. Often during that visit, in the library, or in walks after dark up and down the corridor, or, when the weather allowed, in walks about the grounds, those subjects were renewed. The one thing that first struck me at that time was his entire openness of mind, his readiness to hear whatever could be urged against his own deepest convictions, the willingness with which he welcomed any difficulties felt by others, and the candour with which he answered them from his own experience and storehouse of reflection. He exemplified

that text which he often quoted, 'The heart of the righteous man studieth to answer.' This was a characteristic of him which is not often found in men so religious. Commonly the statement of any view, very unlike that which they have been accustomed to hold, shocks them; and younger inquirers, seeing that they are thought impious or give pain, cease to reveal their thoughts, and intercourse is at an end. With Mr. Erskine it was just the reverse of this. His whole manner and spirit elicited confidence from younger men. No thought could ever have occurred to them which, if they were serious about it, they need have hesitated to tell him. And it would seldom be that they did not find in his replies something either really helpful, or at least something well worth their pondering.

The following are some notes of his conversations made during that first visit.

What is the true guide?

Answer.—I fall back more and more on first principles. The conscience in each man is the Christ in each man. It is the ray of light coming straight from the great Fountain of Light; or rather, it is the eye guided by the Sun; or it is the child's shell murmuring of its native ocean; or the cord let down by God into each man by which He leads each. Often the string lies quite slack; the man is not conscious of the guidance and the guide. Then the string becomes tight, and the man feels the drawing, he is conscious of God. The great thing is to identify duty and conscience hourly with God.

The universal diffusion of conscience through all men is Christ in all men,—"Christ in you the hope of glory."

He was in the man, and the man was made by Him, and the man knew Him not. This is true of every man by nature. And the great thing is to become conscious of Him, and to know Him through Himself revealed in

conscience. 'The Spirit (not the wind) bloweth whither it will, and ye hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth.' But for not being able to tell we are in fault. This is our sin. [This was with Mr. Erskine one favourite gloss upon that text in St. John's Gospel, though I never felt sure that it was a correct one. Besides this he gave to it other applications.]

"No man hath ascended up to heaven. . . ." And so it is only Christ in the man, the man who has become one with Christ, and Christlike, in whom the old self is subdued, that can ascend up to heaven.

This light, this conscience, manifests itself often to man as witnessing against his present state, making him feel the hollowness and discomfort of life apart from God. Still, the witnessing against him,—this is Christ within the man, grieving for his alienation, calling him to be reconciled. This condemnation and uneasiness of soul is the sound or tone which God's voice takes when speaking in the natural heart. It is God and Christ calling him to return. This voice of God sounds loud in great crises. If a man were tempted to commit murder, then it would sound more loudly than usual. But it does not then for the first time begin to sound. It has been sounding always, through all his ordinary life, in a low habitual tone, but he has not heard, nor cared to hear it.

There is into each man a continual inflowing of the Logos. It is by virtue of Christ being in all men that conscience is universal in men.

"He that answereth before he heareth is a son that causeth shame." So we ought to hear this voice of the Spirit before we act or speak; we ought to wait for it, and not make haste. "The heart of the righteous *studieth* to answer." Man ought to wait on this voice, for it is always there, if we would hear it. When our Lord said, "He

that hath ears to hear, let him hear," it was this inward ear he meant.

This conscience, this inward light, is the great organ of Theology. Only that which commends itself to his conscience, that which each man can feel to be right and true, that only he really believes. Whatever more he fancies he believes on authority or otherwise, is not real belief, or faith. But does not this make the old Sophists' saying true, *ἄνθρωπος μέτρον πάντων*, or each man's individual frame or feeling the measure of truth for him? No! For,

1*st*, It is of the true nature of conscience not to be individual. Conscience is not mine, I am conscience's Each man does not possess it, but is possessed by it. It speaks in virtue of a higher light than itself, of which it declares itself to be but a ray. It swells outward to Christ, and finds its fulness only in Him and God. It is Their continual witness, referring back not to itself but to Them. Therefore this light never can cut itself off from its source, and set itself up as an independent authority, for this would be to abdicate its own nature.

2*d*, Neither will a man, who is truly awakened to listen to conscience, set up his own conscience as a rival of the Bible, and reject all Scripture that does not at once commend itself to him. For the conscience that is true is humble, and feels that it is but a feeble struggling ray, and will lie at the feet of the true light. Only it will not say that it believes anything till it does believe it, that is, till it feels it to be right and true. Further than this it cannot go. That larger light which men may urge on its acceptance, on the authority of the Church or of Scripture, it does not deny this, or set itself against it. Only it cannot take it in, make it its own, till for itself it sees light through it. It will say, What you urge me to believe may be true, but I do not know it to be true now.

I may come to see it, or I may not, but at present I am not in a condition to witness for it.

Christ is the great universal conscience, calling to every man, Hear and your soul shall live—live to God, die to yourself.

Next day he added this corollary to the above: God speaks to me in conscience, but I do not always apprehend His language. I seek to know and apprehend it, and I find far more in the Bible than anywhere else that explains conscience. It may be said, All things are calls, all things are intended to educate men, and so in a sense they are. But the Bible is so in a peculiar way. I explain conscience by the Bible, and the Bible by conscience, both ways; but till they meet and illuminate each the other, there is no true light, no true conviction.

The Gospel history is the consciousness I find within me expressed outwardly. It is only by finding a oneness between the outward history and the inward consciousness that I can understand the history, and the history makes me understand my own consciousness. The history of Jesus Christ, what He sorrowed and suffered, is a perfect outward manifestation of what will go on imperfectly in every man's heart now, just in proportion as he enters into the mind of Christ.

Another day during that visit Mr. Erskine's conversation took this turn:—Christ stands to us in two capacities. *First*, As the Representative of the Father He came, showing us what is the character of the Father, bringing down to us His holy, righteous, loving purpose towards us. And so He comes down now to each man, is, as it were, again incarnate in each man's conscience, and in that conscience, the true light, the Spirit within each man, He grieves over each man's sin, agonises for it in each man, 'suffers, the just for the unjust.' Just as you

might conceive the spirit of St. John to enter inside the spirit of Barabbas,—St. John's heart to be shut up in Barabbas's heart,—how it would be pained and grieved by the dark polluted environment in which it found itself! Naturally it would will itself away from such an abode. But if it were to stay there, and though grieving and sore pained yet refuse to depart till it had purified Barabbas and won him back to God, in some such way we may conceive of the Christ indwelling in each man. Or as an upright high-minded elder brother might grieve and feel pain at seeing some great meanness or base action in a younger. At first the elder only would feel pain and grief, the younger would feel none. But this pain of the elder might in time be seen by the younger, and being seen might draw him to feel the same, to enter into the sorrow of the elder, and so to be of one mind with him, and be delivered from his meanness.

Christ came once, and was manifested eighteen hundred years ago; but both before and since that time He has been, as it were, diffused through humanity, lying at the bottom of every man as the basis of his being. It was in Him that God created man—just as light was the first created thing, spread abroad diffusedly, but not gathered up into the sun till the fourth day. So Christ the Head was latent in humanity as the Head, but the Head did not come out and show itself to the senses till the personal Christ appeared in the flesh.

Secondly, Christ's second capacity is as the Head of the whole race. In this capacity He fulfils God's whole will, accepts the suffering which is eternally inseparable from sin, bears it willingly, not indeed to save us from suffering, but to call each of us to accept God's whole will gladly as He accepted it, to accept suffering when sent, not as a punishment but as healing, and so to follow Christ,—to

call each to die continually to self, and to accept death as a duty, as the declaration of God's will and purpose towards us,—to accept it, not with sullen resignation, or general bare trust in God's mercy, but as feeling that God's purpose for us is always and wholly good, whether in life or death. It is through dying to self continually in life, and at last through actual death, willingly borne, only thus that man can overcome. Sin and suffering are eternally connected. The body which belongs to this seen system of things, to which man alienated from God has surrendered himself, it is righteous that it should suffer and die for its sin. And the spiritual man will see and feel the righteousness of this, and willingly give himself up to suffering and death. And so Christ the righteous, as the Elder Brother of our race, standing at the head of humanity, willingly entered into and bore this death which the rest had to bear, and by bearing He overcame it. And so it is only by closing with death and suffering willingly (in the fellowship with Him), by accepting it as righteous, and apprehending God's righteous loving purpose in it, that any man can overcome it. . . .

Christ once entered into humanity, and enters again into each man, not only to express God's grief and pain over each man's sin, but also that He may say in His capacity as the Son, and also as the Head of the race, Righteous art Thou, O God, in thus judging sin, in connecting suffering eternally with sin. In this aspect both the capacities of Christ combine.

Another time this was the turn his conversation took :— Suppose a man who had all his life long been a reckless profligate, sinning every day without the least compunction ; but suppose that at last it had come to this that he must either commit one of his daily sins, tell one of his habitual lies, or be put to death unless he did so. It might be

that this might pull him up; conscience might awake, check him, and keep him from the meanness of buying his life by one of those sins which he had been in the habit of committing daily without scruple. Here something within might whisper, Do it this once, and then you will have time to repent of all your past life; for if you die now, you must go at once to hell. This would seem to be conscience, but it would be a false conscience. The true conscience would say, Do it not, fear not that God can ever punish a man for doing right, or that a man can ever lose by doing God's will, by obeying His own voice within him. In every call from God to arise and do the right, justification for the past is implied. The justification comes contained in this voice of conscience. The command to abstain from sin implies that God justifies,—has put away the past sin. And thus when the man consents with his full will to death rather than do the wrong, and recognises and accepts in the call to die God's loving purpose toward him, he receives the forgiveness and justification into himself. Every call of God to do right, every voice of conscience, is a new coming of justification to the man. Even if it come in the shape of a condemnation of the man's present condition, it is still the same, a fresh inflow of justification from God. For why should He deal with the man at all, even to condemn him, if He did not intend to deliver him from sin and alienation?

When Sir Walter Raleigh was brought to trial, the counsel for his defence pleaded that he could not by the law of England, or by right justice, be condemned, or even tried, for the said offence, because it took place long ago, and he had received the royal commission to serve the Queen since the offence had been committed. And every time the royal commission was given to a man, it by its

nature declared that he was a perfectly clear, free man. So every time that God speaks to us in conscience, we may accept it as declaring that He still justifies us, pardons us, calls us to put away our sin, to die to our own selves, to give up our own will, and enter into His will. And if we apprehend His call thus, and do surrender ourselves willingly to His will, we accept the justification.

Another time during that same visit he said:—The Bible is the great interpreter of consciousness, and of conscience. Conscience is not mine, I am its. Often a man does not understand his conscience. A man, for instance, is wroth with his neighbour who has wronged him, vents his anger against him, and longs to be revenged. Another comes and says to him, Why are you angry with that man? Why do you wish to trample on him? He answers, Because my conscience, looking at this injury in God's light, tells me that I do well to be angry and revengeful against him. The other rejoins, Did God really give you this conscience, this sense of your neighbour's sin, in order that you may trample on him, or not rather that, feeling deeply his sin, you may help him out of it? Again, years afterwards the expostulator finds the angry man on the point of death; he is overwhelmed with the remembrance of his sin, and he says that all this terror is just the effect of God's anger towards him, and the sign that He intends to punish him. The expostulator puts him in mind of their conversation years ago, asks him if he thinks that God has this anger, and has made this declaration of it in his terror-stricken conscience, that he may destroy him, and not rather that he may help him out of his sin and his terror—just as the strong conviction of his neighbour's wrong-doing years ago was given to himself, not that he might take vengeance on him, but that he might help him out of his sin.

Such were some of the lines on which his thoughts ran during that first visit in 1854. All who knew him will probably recognise in them either the very thoughts they have themselves heard from him, or at least thoughts like those they have heard from him. These were the channels which his mind latterly had grooved for itself, and which it wore ever deeper as time went on. When he was alone with a sympathetic hearer, and sometimes to those who were not very sympathetic, his discourse would return again and again to the same channels, and flow on for hours together in thoughtful monologue.

These more inward subjects of conversation he often varied by recurring to the events and the persons of his past life which had most impressed him. He would often talk with much affection of the friends he had made abroad. —at Paris, at Geneva, and at Rome, and most frequently recurred to the memory of Madame de Broglie.

Of home events, that which filled the largest place in his retrospect was the revival of religion which began at Row in 1828, and continued there till it was cut short by the summary verdict of the General Assembly in 1831. Mr. Erskine, as is well known, had been an earnest sympathiser and fellow-worker with Mr. Campbell, had stood by his side through all the persecutions he was called to undergo, and had been a witness of that never-to-be-forgotten night in the General Assembly which cast out from the Church of his fathers one of the saintliest of her sons. The decisions of the Assembly could not touch Mr. Erskine, but all the more for this he felt the deep wrong which the Church by that act had done to his friend, and the still deeper injury she had done to herself. He never ceased to regard it as the stoning by the Church of Scotland of her best prophet, the deliberate rejection of the highest light vouchsafed to her in his time. Few felt as he did

that day; but as years went on more and more woke up to know what an evil thing had been done in the land. From that time on for many years he ceased to have any sympathy with the Church of Scotland, when not only the men, but the truth he most prized, had been so rudely trampled down. In his eyes all the calamities that befell her were the natural sequel of, perhaps judgments for, the wrong she had done in 1831. In the last twenty years of his life he came to know and value both the character and the teaching of some of the young generation of ministers, and from time to time he attended their ministrations. His was not the spirit to feel anything like sectarian hostility to the Church, though he believed it to have so deeply sinned, but he never ceased to feel righteous indignation against the wrong-doing, though not against the wrong-doers.

One story connected with this time he used to tell. It was of the Rev. William Dow, a good man, who was minister of a parish in the south of Scotland, but who for siding with the views of Mr. Campbell of Row was called to stand his trial before the General Assembly. On the Sunday immediately before he went to Edinburgh for his trial, being quite sure what fate awaited him, he thus addressed his country congregation :—"You all know that to-morrow I leave this to go to Edinburgh, and to stand my trial before the General Assembly. And the result I know will be that I shall be turned out of my parish, and that this is the last time I shall address you as your minister. This you all know. But there is one thing about myself which you do not know, but which I will tell you. When I first came here to be your minister I found difficulty in obtaining a house in the parish to live in. There was but one house in the parish I could have, that was suitable, and that belonged to a poor widow. I

went and offered a higher rent for her house than she paid. She was dispossessed, and I got the house. I put that poor woman out of her house then, and I hold it to be a righteous thing in God to put me out of my parish now."

This accepting the punishment as a righteous thing was entirely to Mr. Erskine's mind.

His friend Mr. Campbell of Row writes of him in 1863: 'He is very full, as has ever been his way, of the thoughts which have last taken form in his mind, and would bend everything to them; and my work, as of old, has been to endeavour to keep before him what he may seem to me to leave out of account.' This exactly describes his discourse as his friends knew it.—'And would bend everything to them,' that is, to the thoughts that for the time absorbed him. This was especially observable in many of the interpretations which he imposed on difficult texts of Scripture. They were exceedingly ingenious, and such as could only have occurred to a meditative and highly spiritual mind. But it often seemed, as if the interpretation was born from within his own thought, rather than gathered from impartial exegesis. So strong was the heat of his cherished convictions, that before them the toughest, most obdurate text gave way, melted and fused into the mould which his bias had framed for it. It was the characteristic of his mind to seize whatever truth it did see with a peculiar intensity of grasp. This is what Mr. Campbell in a letter of 1868 speaks of as his 'tendency to reduce many aspects of truth to one, making him hesitate to see now the importance, not to say the correctness, of what he once urged, making him, indeed, appear to give up what he once held. I do not believe that his views have at all changed as they appear to himself to have done. . . .' This passage seems to mark exactly the distinction between the minds of the two friends, as they struck me when I used to see them

together, or rather perhaps when, after conversing with one, I afterwards spoke to the other on the same subject. Mr. Erskine, whatever truth possessed him, threw himself wholly into it, became absorbed in it, expounded it with a gentle yet vehement eloquence, and illustrated it with a wealth of ingenious illustration which was quite foreign to Mr. Campbell's habits of thought. Mr. Campbell, on the other hand, even the truths he most realised, he could contemplate with long patience, could move round them, and consider them deliberately from every side, could see them in all their bearings on other truths, and see those other truths in their bearing on them. This patient power of balancing truths seemingly opposed, combined with the persistent adherence to his first cherished principles, contrasted strikingly with the vehemence with which Mr. Erskine flung himself on the thoughts that had once taken possession of him.

Arising perhaps out of this tendency in Mr. Erskine to be absorbed in one great truth, which he made to overbear all other truths that opposed it, was his belief in the final restitution of all men. This seemed to him to be the only legitimate issue of the Gospel. The conviction that it was so grew on him latterly, and he expressed it freely. He used to dwell much on those passages in St. Paul's epistles which seemed to him to favour this cherished belief of his. In one thing, however, Mr. Erskine was altogether unlike most of those who hold the tenets of Universalism. No man I ever knew had a deeper feeling of the exceeding evil of sin, and of the Divine necessity that sin must always be misery. His universalistic views did not in any way relax his profound sense of God's abhorrence of sin.

Any one who talked intimately with Mr. Erskine in later years could not help hearing these views put strongly before him. Often when he urged them on me he seemed

disappointed when I could not acquiesce. I used to urge that we do not know enough of the nature and possibilities of the human will to warrant us in holding that a time must come when it will yield to moral suasion which it may have resisted all through its earthly existence. Then as to the Bible, though there are some isolated texts which seem to make Mr. Erskine's way, yet Scripture, taken as a whole, speaks a quite different language. The strongest, most emphatic declarations against his views seem to be words of our Lord Himself. Therefore I shrink from all dogmatic assertions on this tremendous subject, desiring to go no further than the words of Scripture allow, till the day comes which shall bring forth His righteousness as the noonday.

It would be no adequate representation of Mr. Erskine as he appeared among men, to conceive of him as confining all his conversation to religion and theology. Yet these, no doubt, were his favourite subjects, those that lay nearest his heart; and when he met with a sympathetic listener he poured himself forth unweariedly. It was not any mere speculations about theology, any mere dealing through the intellect with what is called scientific theology. That was to him the mere outwork, the shell of something far more inward and vital. In that inner region that lies beyond all mere speculation you felt that his whole being was absorbed,—that he was making it his own, not with the mere understanding only, but that his heart, conscience, and spirit were wholly in it. And whether his listener understood all he said—for sometimes it was hard to catch for its subtlety,—and whether he agreed with it or not, for sometimes it was novel and even startling,—no one, who could feel what spiritual-mindedness was, could come away from his converse without feeling that in his society they

had breathed for a while a heavenly atmosphere. To return from it to common doings and every-day talk was like descending from the mount of vision to the dusty highway.

It used to be a strange feeling to walk about his place with him, wearing, as he did, to the outward eye, the guise of a Scottish laird, while all the while his inner spirit, you felt, was breathing the atmosphere of St. John. It was something so unlike anything you met with elsewhere in society. The Scotland of his later years, in his own rank, and among all the educated classes, had become more religious than that of his early manhood. But even at its best the tone of religious society was unlike his. For when left alone to himself he was a man absorbed in the thought of God. There is a saying of Boehme's which he loved to quote: "The element of the bird is the air, the element of the fish is the water, the element of the salamander is the fire, and the heart of God is Jacob Boehme's element." As I have heard him quote these words I used to think 'Thou art the man that Boehme describes himself to be.' What Mr. Alexander Scott is reputed to have said, many other hearts will respond to, that ever after he knew Mr. Erskine he never thought of God but the thought of Mr. Erskine was not far away. And combined with this went another tendency,—I mean the absolute conviction that all true thought about God would be found to harmonise with all that is truest and highest in the conscience and the affections of man. It was the desire himself to see and to make others see this harmony, to see that Christian doctrine was that which alone meets the cravings of heart and conscience, —it was this desire which animated him in all the books he wrote, and in all the many conversations he carried on.

Over the social circle that met within his home at Linlathen, his Christian influence showed itself in many

ways, and though differing according as it met with different characters, yet was always in harmony with itself. Among the many relatives of all ages and characters who visited him, and the guests who, especially during summer, were welcomed to Linlathen, there were of course those who could not sympathise with him in his deepest interests. If, however, they cared for literature, in Mr. Erskine they found one who was at home in all that was finest and most soul-like in literature, ancient and modern, and his bright and sympathetic remarks or questions drew out the stores even of the most reserved. The Classics he knew and loved to speak of, Shakespeare he knew only less well than the Bible, and his conversation was edged with many apt quotations from him. Even when sportsmen were his guests, men whose chief delights lay at Melton Mowbray, he found some bond of sympathy with them, something that made them take pleasure in his society. He had a wonderful art of setting every one at ease, and drawing out the best side of every character. In this, his own natural graciousness was perfectly seconded by his sister Mrs. Stirling, who so long presided as the lady of the house at Linlathen. She was of a character hardly less remarkable than her brother, like-minded with him in her aims and in the spirit she was of, but with more turn for the practical affairs of life. She stood, in a large measure, between Mr. Erskine and the buffets of the outward world, and allowed his life to flow on in its own natural current. How much her presence contributed to make Linlathen the well-ordered and happy home that it was can hardly be over-estimated. Never perhaps were brother and sister more fitted to each other, more able each to supply what the other had not, and so to make a home in which all the requirements of refined Christian society were combined. Very seldom has a home

been seen in which perfect ease, refinement, and high intelligence so blended with the most sunny graciousness and all-pervading Christian charity. No one, however great a stranger he might be when he entered that house, could there be a stranger long, and none of the many who visited Mr. Erskine and his sister there,—neighbours, high and low, guests from far and near,—will ever forget it. Another element was added to the family group by his sister Mrs. Paterson, who generally spent a great part of the summer at Linlathen. She was so much of an invalid that she could not come down-stairs regularly, but when she was able for this, or when visitors had an opportunity of conversing with her in private, they found in her an interest in things as keen and an intelligence as active as her brother's, combined with a spirit singularly gentle, attractive, and elevating. To one looking back on the Linlathen of those years, it seems to represent the very Scottish counterpart of that gentle and high-souled English family-group which is portrayed in the 'Memorials of a Quiet Life.'

I remember calling one summer afternoon at Mrs. Paterson's house in Morningside, about the year 1863 or 1864, I think. Mrs. Paterson, Mrs. Stirling, and her sister-in-law Mrs. James Erskine, were alone together in the drawing-room. For an hour I sat while they talked of the things nearest their own hearts and their brother's, in a natural yet most unworldly strain, such as conversation seldom attains. Mrs. Paterson perhaps spoke most, but all three took part. It was early summer, and the western sun was shedding a soft light along the green slopes of the Pentland hills, visible from the drawing-room window. When the hour was ended I came away, but a soothing sense remained long after, as though for a brief while I had been allowed to overhear a high pure strain of heavenly music. I felt that all three were, not by natural kinship only, but by

the kinship of the heart, spiritual sisters of their gifted brother.

With any of his guests at Linlathen who cared for it, Mr. Erskine used to continue his talk, not only in his library and along the corridor, but in walks about the place, or in a longer walk to the bare bleak links of Monifieth, where the outlook was on the eastern sea. A few of his sayings during such walks recur to me.

He said more than once that all the most deeply devout men he had known had been brought up as Calvinists. 'How then do you reconcile this fact with the life-long conflict you have maintained against Calvinism?' 'In this way,' he would reply; 'Calvinism makes God and the thought of Him all in all, and makes the creature almost as nothing before Him. So it engenders a deep reverence, a profound humility and self-abasement, which are the true beginnings of all religion. It exalts God infinitely above the creature. In this, Calvinism is true and great, and I honour it. What I cannot accept is its conception of God as One in whom power is the paramount attribute, to which a loving righteousness is made quite subordinate, and its restriction of the love of God in a way which seems to me not righteousness, but partiality.'

Another time, when speaking of how orthodoxy, correctness of intellectual belief, is made in Scotland the test and synonym of goodness, he used to tell of a gardener he had at Linlathen. The old man was, like many of his countrymen, a great theologian, and piqued himself on the correctness of his belief. One day, when speaking of the good men he had known, the gardener said, after enumerating several, 'And there was Mr. Campbell of the Row; he was a vara gude man, but than he devairged (diverged),' —as if after that there was no more to be said for him.

His relations to his neighbours at Linlathen of all classes were of the kindliest. I remember hearing of his having lost a number of his best Southdown ewes which were feeding in the park. The keeper watched, and found that the destroyer was a large Newfoundland dog, which he caught in the act. The dog belonged to a resident in the neighbouring town of Broughty-Ferry. The case went before the Sheriff, and the owner of the dog was condemned to pay to Mr. Erskine the value of all the ewes which had been destroyed. Some time afterwards Mr. Erskine was taken with compunction, as if he had been too hard on his neighbour; so he sent him from his own flock a present of fully as many ewes as had been paid for. One never heard how this act was regarded in the district, whether as the deed of unselfish kindness that it was, or as one of eccentricity and weakness.

In earlier days of his discipleship, when he and Mr. Campbell first saw a light in God's love which not many others then acknowledged, Mr. Erskine, as is well known, had for a time expounded, and even preached, to audiences more or less large, at Linlathen and elsewhere. He had, however, long ceased to do this when I first knew him. His voice was only heard in his morning reading of the Bible and in prayer with his own household in the library. The impression of him, as he conducted that simple worship, those who shared it will always remember. His daily walk, either in going or returning, often brought him to some cottage where a sick or aged person lay, and he would request his companion to remain for a little, while he went in to pay his friendly visit. Many records might have been gathered of persons around Linlathen, at Broughty-Ferry and elsewhere, who being in darkness and distress of mind, and finding no relief from the ministrations of the ordinary religious teachers, first found light

and peace from words spoken to them by Mr. Erskine. One can readily understand how this should be. It was not only that his large human sympathy, and his deep moral and spiritual hold of truth, fitted him to reach hearts that were in darkness. But it was because when he spoke to them of God and His love, he did not speak, as at second-hand, of something he had read in a book, but he witnessed directly to that which he had himself known and tried.

For the last ten or twelve years before Mrs. Stirling died, he generally took a house in Edinburgh, where they passed the months from January till May. This suited his social disposition, and gave him exactly that kind of society which he most relished. He thus was able to continue his intercourse with such of his early companions as still survived, with his cousin the scholarly Mr. George Dundas (afterwards Lord Manor), with Lord Rutherfurd, and with the aged Mr. James Mackenzie, son of 'the Man of Feeling.' In this way, too, he saw something of younger men, who were drawn to him by reverence and affection, and whom he welcomed with a sympathy at once fatherly and fraternal. Those winters in Edinburgh gave him, moreover, opportunities of seeing many relatives and friends not easily seen at other times, and each winter brought his two old and like-minded friends, Mr. Duncan of Parkhill and Mr. Campbell (of Row) to be his guests for a time. In his house in Edinburgh he used to exercise the same loving hospitality as at Linlathen. 'What is the end of all social gatherings of men?' some one asks, and answers, 'A little conversation, high, clear, and spiritual.' This result was attained, if ever, at the board where Mr. Erskine presided. He used to gather round his table small parties, seldom more than eight or ten, of persons well assorted, who would like to meet each other. Never were there more delightful evenings,—anecdote,

pleasant humour, and thought flowed freely and naturally, and you came away feeling that the hours had passed, not only enjoyably, but profitably. Of a visit to Mr. Erskine in 1864, Mr. Campbell wrote :—'Mr. Erskine is so varied and full, passing so easily to what Professor Thomson, who dined with us yesterday, or Professor Rogers, who dined with us to-day, contribute from their special stores, drawing them out as an intelligent questioner does, and often by natural transition passing to what is higher.'

His forenoons were spent partly in writing letters; sometimes in giving more regular expression to his favourite thoughts; partly, also, in reading. His love of literature was intense, with a keen sense of what was most excellent. I have already noted his familiarity with Shakespeare, and how readily he drew on that great storehouse. If you went into his sitting-room on a forenoon during those years, you would probably find him engaged in reading some of the speeches of Thucydides, or a dialogue of Plato. His Greek was kept in continual exercise by the close study of the New Testament in the original. He used to say to me that he had such a thirst for learning, and admiration of it, that he believed he would have made himself a learned man, had it not been for the early failure of his eyesight. This confined his reading for some years to a quarter of an hour a day. What more he overtook was by the tedious process of listening to a reader. This inability to study cast him back on his own thoughts, and did much to foster that inwardness of mind which was natural to him.

During those winters his appearance, as he passed along Princes Street to and from his afternoon visit to the New Club, must have struck most passers-by,—with his broad hat or wideawake, and his quaint, antique, weather-fending guise. Walking with him on one such occasion, I observed that he stopped and spoke very cordially with a

distinguished ecclesiastical leader of the time, who was well known to disagree with him, and strongly to disapprove of his views. 'You seem very cordial with Dr. ——.' With a smile, he answered, 'He tries to cut me, but I never allow him. I always walk in before him, and make him shake hands.' On another occasion as I walked with him, we forgathered with Dr. John Brown, and we three stood talking together for some time. When Dr. Brown passed on, he said, 'I like him; he is a fine vernacular man; he can speak to you in a whisper. Have you ever observed it is only Scotchmen who can speak in a whisper? The English cannot do it.'

One Sunday he and I had been together to church, where a young divine preached a somewhat rambling, unconnected discourse. We came away, and said nothing. Some time afterwards, as we were walking in silence, he stopped, and looking round to me said, 'The educated mind desiderates a nexus,' and then, without any more, passed on.

These are small things, hardly worth repeating, but they are characteristic, and to those at least who knew him, may serve to recall, not only his tone of voice, but the quiet smile with which he used to say such things.

Among the last of the occasions on which he was allowed to receive his friends in Edinburgh was in the spring of 1866, when his old and much-valued friend Mr. Carlyle, after a long absence, revisited Edinburgh to be installed as Rector of the University. Many will still remember the wise and gracious courtesy with which he then performed the duties of hospitality, on the one hand securing for his guest the repose he needed and desired, on the other according to as many as possible the coveted privilege of meeting the sage of Chelsea. On the day on which Mr. Carlyle addressed the students in the large Music Hall, Mr. Erskine, knowing how great was the effort for a retired man

of Mr. Carlyle's years, and anxious how he might feel after it was over, had asked no one to dinner for that day. When the address was well achieved, and Mr. Erskine found that Mr. Carlyle was none the worse, but rather the better for the deliverance, he asked two or three of his intimate friends to come and join a quiet dinner-party. That evening Sir William Stirling Maxwell sat at the foot of the table, and with nice tact gave such turn to the conversation as allowed fullest scope to the sage who has praised silence so well, but fortunately does not practise it. Released from his burden, Mr. Carlyle was in excellent spirits, and discoursed in his most genial mood of his old Dumfriesshire remembrances, of the fate of James IV., and other matters of Scottish history, and of the then Emperor Napoleon, of whom, as may be imagined, he was no admirer. Those days when Mr. Erskine received Mr. Carlyle as his guest were among the last of his hospitalities in Edinburgh.

During the next winter his two sisters, first Mrs. Stirling, soon after Mrs. Paterson, who had been the chief earthly supports of his life, were removed, and his house was left to him desolate. The staff of family affection, on which he had so long leaned, was broken; the hand which for years had arranged all the outward framework of his life was withdrawn. All that was identified with his youth, all that 'his eye loved and his heart held converse with' from childhood, had now passed out of sight. 'He was as a man moving his goods into a far country, who at intervals and by portions sends them before him, till his present abode is wellnigh unfurnished. He had sent forward his friends on their journey, while he himself stayed behind, that there might be those in heaven to have thoughts of him, to look out for him, and receive him when his Lord should call.' These words, in which Dr. Newman describes the old age of St. John, truly represent Mr. Erskine during those last

years. Though he passed his few remaining winters in Edinburgh, yet he never again after Mrs. Stirling's death took a house there. In summers at Linlathen he used to say, 'As I go to bed at night I have to pass two empty rooms, which I never passed before without entering them.' Younger relatives gathered round him. His nephew and niece especially, who lived with him at Linlathen, did for him all that the most devoted and watchful love could do. But his own strength and health were declining, and there was an oppression about his heart, which at times was distressing. Still, during those last years he laboured on assiduously to complete a book which he had begun, when roused by a strong sense of the spiritual blindness betrayed in Renan's much-talked-of 'Vie de Jésus.' That book, notwithstanding all its outward grace of style and felicitous description, seemed to him at the core so short-sighted and misleading, that after a silence of more than thirty years he once more took his pen to say something in reply to it. He utterly repudiated the character which it drew of our Lord, and almost resented the fatuity which could separate with a sharp line the morality of the Gospels from their doctrinal teaching as to Christ Himself. He used to say, 'As you see in many English churches the Apostles' Creed placed on one side of the altar, on the other the Ten Commandments, so Renan would divide as with a knife the moral precepts of the Gospels from their doctrines. Those he would retain, these he would throw away. Can anything be more blind? As well might you expect the stem and leaves of a flower to flourish when you had cut away the root, as to retain the morality of the Gospels when you have discarded its doctrinal basis. Faith in Christ, and God in Christ, is the only root from which true Christian morality can grow.' This, or something like this, was what he used to say, and to bring this out fully in connection with

his other views of the inner and eternal relation of the Son to the Father, and of the Father to the Son, was a work which he desired to accomplish before the end. The whole line of thought which he wished to express stood out clear before his own mind to the last, but the physical labour of committing it to paper and arranging it was great, almost too great, for him. Yet he never ceased trying to put it into shape, and if he died without accomplishing all he wished to do, completed chapters were found sufficient to appear, after his death, in his last work, 'The Spiritual Order.'

The last visit which I remember having paid to him at Linlathen was on the sixth day of July, 1868,—a beautiful summer day. I had arrived there in the forenoon, and after lunch he asked me to take a drive with him. We drove to the manse of Mains, to make his first call on a young minister who had been recently placed there. Mains was a parish in which he had taken much interest, and which, chiefly through his influence, had enjoyed the benefit of a succession of unusually good ministers. Among those whom Mr. Erskine had helped to place there, and with whom he had afterwards lived in much intimacy, were the late Dr. John Robertson, afterwards of the Cathedral Church, Glasgow, and the Rev. John M'Murtrie, now minister of St. Bernard's, Edinburgh.

It was a day of delightful sunshine, and as we drove to Mains the genial air seemed to touch the springs of old feeling and memory with him. He went back in retrospect to early companions,—the large cousinhood who used to meet at Airth and Kippendavie. He said how he loved the scenery of Stirlingshire and Perthshire, with the greenness and luxuriance of their woodland,—not without, I think, a silent mental contrast with the bare landscape and stunted timber of the eastern coast, in which his own lot

had been cast. He said, if I remember right, that he had often had a dream of spending his last summers in those western regions which were so dear to him in memory.

After we had returned from our drive, we sat for some time on the lawn just over the Dighty Water, which ran underneath the bank on the top of which the house stands. It was about six o'clock P.M., and the sun was shining warm on us as we sat, and beautifying the landscape near and far. After talking for some time, he asked me if I remembered Mr. Standfast in the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and his words when he came to the bank of the stream: 'The thoughts of what I am going to, and of the conduct that waits for me on the other side, doth lie as a glowing coal at my heart. . .' And then, looking across the Dighty to its farther bank, he added, 'I think that within a year from this I shall be on the other side.'

He then, I think, spoke of the awful silence of God, how it sometimes became oppressive, and the heart longed to hear, in answer to its cry, some audible voice. Then he quoted that word, 'Be not silent to me, O Lord: lest if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit;' and then I know he added, 'But it has not always been silence to me. I have had one revelation; it is now, I am sorry to say, a matter of memory with me. It was not a revelation of anything that was new to me. After it, I did not know anything which I did not know before. But it was a joy for which one might bear any sorrow,—"Joie, joie, pleurs de joie," as was the title of a tract I used to read at Geneva. I felt the power of love, that God is love, that He loved me, that He had spoken to me,'—and then, after a long pause,—'that He had broken silence to me.' As he spoke he touched me quickly on the arm, as if to indicate the direct impact from on high of which he had been aware. As he walked away, leaning

on my arm, round the west end of the house, towards the door he added: 'I know many persons in the other world, and I would like to see them again.' This was, as far as I remember, the last visit I paid him at Linlathen. The conversation I have just given was so remarkable that I made a note of it immediately, and I have given it as I wrote it down at the time.

During the next two winters (1868-69 and 1869-70) I saw him from time to time in Edinburgh.

One thing very remarkable during those last years must have struck all who conversed intimately with him,—his ever deepening sense of the evil of sin, and the personal way in which he took this home to himself. Small things done or said years ago would come back upon him and lie on his conscience, often painfully. Things which few other men would have ever thought of again, and which when told to others would seem trifling or harmless, were grievous to him in remembrance. 'I know that God has forgiven me for these things,' he would say, 'but I cannot forgive myself.' How far this burdened sense was connected with physical oppression about the heart no one can determine. He himself would have been among the last to accept the common explanation of spiritual malady by merely bodily causes. This, however, I believe, is true, that after that great effusion of blood, which was the prelude of the end, had relieved his heart, the rest was, as Mr. Campbell writing at the time expressed it, all peace,—love, with perfect clearness of mind. I was not privileged to see him during that solemn interval when he lay waiting for the end, and speaking words full of comfort and light to all those who were around him.

But his funeral day I remember well. It was a calm bright day of March. The funeral prayers of the English Church were read in his own library, where he had

so often prayed alone and in the family. He was laid beside his mother, and the brother he so revered, in Monifieth Churchyard, which is situated on the estuary of Tay, where it broadens out to meet the ocean. The churchyard was filled with his kindred, his friends, and his neighbours, and over that place and company there seemed to rest for the time a holy calm in harmony with the saintly spirit that had departed. The thoughts of others far away were centred in that churchyard on that day.

One who had in her childhood often listened to his voice, and had since then been long an invalid confined to her room,[1] breathed from her sickbed these touching words as she thought of that day. The image in the third verse especially all who knew him will understand.

ASLEEP.

March 28th, 1870.

Toss, ye wild waves
  Upon the shore,
He is at rest
  For evermore.

Moan o'er the surf,
  Thou wind so drear;
Moan, sob, and wail;
  He will not hear.

Close by he lies;
  But a long sleep,
His wondrous smile
  Enchained doth keep.

Roll, thou wild sea,
  Against the shore,
He is at rest
  For Evermore.

[1] Miss C. Noel, daughter of his old friend the Hon. and Rev. Gerard Noel.

APPENDIX.

No. I.—Page 100.

Extracts from "The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel."

The leading ideas in the "Unconditional Freeness" are sufficiently indicated in the following extracts, taken from the fourth edition:—

"The medicinal virtue of the Gospel lies in the manifestation of that holy love with which God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son as an atonement for its sins. Holy love is the great principle developed in the Gospel. It is the union of an infinite abhorrence towards sin, and an infinite love towards the sinner. This mysterious history is the mighty instrument with which the Spirit of God breaks the power of sin in the heart, and establishes holy gratitude and filial dependence."—P. 16.

"The use of faith is not to remove the penalty or make the pardon better,—for the penalty is removed and the pardon is proclaimed whether we believe it or not,—but to give the pardon a moral influence, by which it may heal the spiritual diseases of the heart, which influence it cannot have unless it is believed."—P. 22.

"Men are not, according to the gospel system, pardoned on account of their belief of the pardon, but they are sanctified by a belief of that pardon, and unless the belief of it produces this effect, neither the pardon nor the belief

are of any use. The pardon of the Gospel is a spiritual medicine; faith is nothing more than the taking of that medicine; and if the spiritual health or sanctification is not produced, neither the spiritual medicine nor the taking of the medicine are of any avail; they have failed of their object."—P. 23.

"The gratuitousness of the Gospel, then, consists in the unrestricted freeness of the pardon which it proclaims."—P. 26.

"The Gospel reveals to us the existence of a fund of divine love containing in it a propitiation for all sins, and this fund is general to the whole race, every individual has a property in it, of the same kind that he has in the common light and air of the world which he appropriates and uses simply by opening his mouth or his eyes. Is it not clear that as soon as any one really knows that such a fund exists, and that it is indeed the gift of God to the world and the common property of all the individuals in the world, just as the natural air and light is, he will immediately infer his own particular interest in it, and enter into the enjoyment of it, and he will make the blessed discovery which no tongue can rightly describe, and no mere intelligence can rightly conceive, even that he himself has a possession, an unalienable, an everlasting possession in the heart of God?"—P. 88.

"I know that justification is generally considered to mean pardon, or the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and I believe that sometimes it may have this meaning in the Bible. But yet I am persuaded, by reasons which I shall afterwards explain, that it chiefly bears the meaning which I am now attributing to it, namely, *a sense of pardon, or of acceptance, or having the conscience purged of guilt,*—and that *justification by faith* always means *a sense of acceptance and safety arising from a belief of that accepted propitiation*

which has been made for the sins of the whole world."—Pp. 89-91.

"Now, if a man really looks to his faith in anything as the ground of his pardon or hope before God, he is as much nourishing the spirit of independence, and as much walking in that spirit, as if he trusted in his obedience. Self is in the one case, as well as in the other, the axis on which the man turns, and the root out of which he grows. And he can scarcely avoid falling into this error in some measure, if he thinks there is no pardon for him until he believes. For if the pardon does not exist until he believes, and immediately exists when he believes, surely his belief has something to do in making it. It is in vain to tell him, that faith does not make it, but only receives it. For he may ask, Where is it then before faith receives it? If my faith only receives it, it must have been in existence before my faith. The only idea that I can attach to the expression, *receiving the pardon by faith,* is that of *believing in the pardon;* but in order to this, the pardon must have been a real pardon before. If the gospel, as it stands in the Bible, actually includes my pardon, then it is clear, that when I believe the gospel, I shall also believe my pardon as a part of it, and thus my faith will receive the pardon. But if the gospel does not in itself contain my pardon, how can my belief of the gospel be a receiving of pardon?"—Pp. 95-7.

"If the gospel were, that God only loved those who should believe in Christ, and that Christ died only for those who should believe in His sacrifice, it is clear that such a gospel does not embrace my pardon, nor the assurance of God's love to me, unless I am a believer; and, therefore, that my belief in such a gospel can give me no comfort, nor peace, until I first ascertain that I believe in Christ. And thus my belief in Christ is made something distinct

from a belief in the gospel, and is only a prerequisite condition in order to my drawing comfort from the gospel; and thus also pardon and the love of God are made rewards of faith in Christ. But this is not the gospel of the Bible, nor the view of faith contained in the Bible, as every attentive reader of that blessed book must know."—P. 99.

"A very common idea of the object of the gospel is, that it is to show how men *may obtain pardon;* whereas, in truth, its object is to show how *pardon for men has been obtained,* or rather to show how God has taken occasion, by the entrance of sin into the world, to manifest the unsearchable riches of holy compassion. And it is to present this most important truth (as I cannot but consider it) to some who may not have thought of it before, that I have published this book,—and it is for this same reason that I have chosen to depart from the common phraseology on the subject,—because I have found the common phraseology liable to misinterpretation. Thus I have observed, that even the phrase *free offer of pardon* is so interpreted, that the very existence of the pardon is made to depend on the acceptance of the offer. The benefit of the pardon does most assuredly depend on its being accepted, but the pardon itself is laid up in Christ Jesus, and depends on nothing but the unchangeable character of God."—Pp. 102-3.

"When I consider this important feature of the first promise (its universality), I cannot help thinking that the modern commentators on prophecy have reason, when they say that the expectation of the restitution of all things occupies a much less space in the common announcements of the gospel, or in the thoughts of Christians than it ought to do. It is the chief feature of that gospel which was preached to Adam, and it is bequeathed to the church in the last words of inspiration as an enduring consolation and expectation,—"Behold, I come quickly." The general

statements of the gospel in our days relate too exclusively to what is already past, and to the individual salvation of each believer. Of course it is impossible altogether to separate the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice from its general and future results; but these results seem to me not brought forward by preachers as they are in the Bible. I do not speak of the detail of these results, nor of the particular fulfilment of the prophecies which relate to the last times, because I do not feel myself qualified to speak on these subjects; but I speak of a fixed and longing expectation, of the sure and fast approaching accomplishment of those promises which announce the final triumph of the Messiah, the establishment of His reign upon earth, the manifestation of the sons of God, and the full development of all those high privileges which arise out of their union with their divine Head. This doctrine appears to me now in a very different light from what it once did."—P. 82.

No. II.—Page 139.

EXTRACTS FROM "THE BRAZEN SERPENT."

The following extracts, from the second edition, are given as illustrative of the testimonies of Mr. Maurice and M. Vinet:—

"But why was this suffering of our nature in the person of Jesus needful? It was a fallen nature; a nature which had fallen by sin, and which, in consequence of this, lay under condemnation. He came into it as a new head, that He might take it out of the fall, and redeem it from sin,

and lift it up to God; and this could be effected only by His bearing the condemnation, and thus manifesting, through sorrow and death, the character of God, and the character of man's rebellion; manifesting God's abhorrence of sin, and the full sympathy of the new Head of the nature in that abhorrence, and thus eating out the taint of the fall, and making honourable way for the inpouring of the new life into the rebellious body. . . .

"When we ask, What is the meaning of the sufferings of Christ; or in what way did those sufferings tend to accomplish the purposes for which he had left the bosom of the Father, and came to this world? we ask a question which, in its bearings, involves the whole character and purposes of God, and the whole character and prospects of man. If this question were put to many persons, we should probably get various answers. One answer that would be pretty generally given to this question is, 'that He came to save sinners, and that He could accomplish this only by suffering in their stead the punishment due to their sin, because thus only their salvation could be reconciled with divine justice, and thus only could it become a righteous thing with God to remit the punishment of the real offenders. In this way both the justice of God and His love were magnified. His justice, in demanding the full penalty of the law; and His love, in providing a substitute to stand in the place of the real offenders, and bear that for them which would have overwhelmed them in everlasting perdition, if they had been obliged to bear it themselves.' I believe that the Spirit of God has made this view of the atonement spirit and life to many souls—and yet I believe that, with some truth in it, it is a very defective view, to say the least of it.

"This view of the atonement, which is generally known by the name of the doctrine of Christ's substitution, has, I know, been held by many living members of His body—

and yet I believe that, with some truth in it, it contains much dangerous error. In the first place, I may observe, that it would not be considered justice in an earthly judge, were he to accept the offered sufferings of an innocent person as a satisfaction for the lawful punishment of a guilty person. And as the work of Christ was wrought to declare and make manifest the righteousness of God, not only to powers and principalities in heavenly places, but to men, to the minds and consciences of men—it is not credible that that work should contain a manifestation really opposed to their minds and consciences. Let me here entreat of my reader to be patient and not to misunderstand me, nor to suppose that, by using this language, I do at all mean to deny or bring into doubt the blessed truth, that Christ tasted death for every man,—for verily and indeed I believe that Christ did taste death for every man, and that, too, in a far deeper and truer sense than is taught by the doctrine of substitution in its ordinary acceptation. The humanly devised doctrine of substitution has come in place of, and has cast out the true doctrine of the headship of Christ, which is the large, and glorious, and true explanation of those passages of Scripture which are commonly interpreted as teaching substitution. Christ died for every man, as the head of every man—not by any fiction of law, not in a conventional way, but in reality as the head of the whole mass of the human nature, which, although composed of many members, is one thing,—one body,—in every part of which the head is truly present.

"If my right hand had committed murder, and my left hand had committed theft, and my feet had been swift to shed blood,—were I to suffer beheading for these offences, no one would say that my head had been the substitute for my hands and my feet. And although, in this case, it be true, that the planning head is the real offender, and

therefore is the proper sufferer, yet the force of the comparison is not thereby destroyed, for even if these members were capable of independent action, they would be punished in the punishment of the head, because they are all really contained in the head, in virtue of its being the root of that system of nerves, which, by pervading them all, does in fact sustain them all. . . .

"And *secondly*, He did not suffer the punishment of sin, as the doctrine of substitution supposes, to dispense with our suffering it, but to change the character of our suffering, from an unsanctified and unsanctifying suffering, into a sanctified and sanctifying suffering. And thus, when our Lord himself speaks to the disciples about His cross and sufferings, He uniformly calls upon them to take up their cross and follow Him, by the same road of suffering. This connection is marked through all the Evangelists, and must therefore be a designed connection.—See Matt. xvi. 21-25; Mark viii. 31-35; Luke ix. 22-24; John xii. 23-26. And Paul desires fellowship in Christ's sufferings, and conformity with His death. The substance of all these passages proves that the substitution of Christ did not consist in this, that He did or suffered something instead of men, so as to save them from doing or suffering it for themselves. And this agrees with the obvious fact, that Christ's death does not save the believer from dying a natural death, nor does His sorrow save the believer from sorrowing. On the contrary, the believer dies; and moreover, dies daily, in consequence of and in proportion to his faith. What Christ did for us, was done for us in a sense and with a view very different from that of saving us from doing it ourselves. He fulfilled the law, for instance, certainly not with the view of saving us from fulfilling it, but, on the contrary, with the very view of enabling us to fulfil it. For the salvation of Christ consists mainly in 'writing the

law upon our hearts,'—and He made Himself a sin-offering, 'that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.'

"When, therefore, it is said that Christ did or does things for us, it is not meant that He did or does them as our substitute, but as our head. He does them for us, as a root does things for the branches,—or as a head or heart does things for the body. . . .

"But if Jesus did not suffer punishment to dispense with our suffering it, what has He accomplished for us by suffering for us? Take this answer in the meantime. Sin can only be burned out of our nature, by our sense of its misery, and by our acquiescence in the righteousness of that misery —which acquiescence we can never truly give, until we see the holy love of God resting upon us, and manifesting itself in the law against which we have sinned, and in the misery which is inflicted upon us through our sin, and on account of our sin. But holy love is a thing which our natural life is incapable of seeing; for our natural life is consciously under the condemnation of sin, and is bearing its punishment, and it cannot draw near to God, or look on God; for its condemnation implies and contains a separation from God—it therefore cannot know love, or see love, because God is love—the natural life, in truth, is the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. And thus, while we continue to live in this natural life, and to see things in its light, we can see nothing in the punishment of sin but what increases our fear, and enmity, and opposedness to God. And thus punishment acts as a poison until we see it by the light of another life—an uncondemned life—which has freedom of access to God, and which can see His love. Now, this is the great thing which Christ has accomplished by suffering for us; He has become a head of new and uncondemned life to every man, in the light of which we may

see God's love in the law and in the punishment, and may thus suffer to the glory of God, and draw out from the suffering that blessing which is contained in it. . . .

"The work of Christ is thus the source of life. It was a work which no creature could have done—a work which none but He could have done—a work without which no man could have been saved—a work, to attempt to do which, or to add to which, is to crucify the Son of God afresh, and without which no man ever did or ever could have done any of those things which his leader and head and God calls on him to do, or indeed ever could reasonably have been called on to do them. It was the great work of atonement, on the credit of which, before it was accomplished, and through the channel of which, since it has been accomplished, the love of God, in the form of favour and forgiveness and the gift of the Spirit enabling man to glorify God, has been given to every human being."—Pp. 34-58.

"With reference to what is written in the 2d chapter of this book on the subject of substitution, let me beg the reader's attention to a few lines more. In the first place, substitution is not a Bible word, but I do not wish to contend either for or against words; I wish to contend for the truth of God,—and if ever I have unnecessarily jarred against the feelings of any child of God, by my use of words, I grieve for it as a sin. But I am satisfied that I have not been guilty of this sin, in objecting to the word substitution as characterising the relation in which Christ stood to us in His sufferings, because I am satisfied that there is a dangerous error connected with the word. Substitution always supposes that the person suffering in the place of another is quite distinct from that other, and quite free from all righteous liability to the doom under which that other is sentenced to suffer. This is, I believe, the idea generally

associated with substitution,—and it is as conveying this idea, that I object to the word, for this idea really controverts the true humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. For though, whilst he was yet in the bosom of the Father, before He took our nature, He was free from all liability of suffering, and was under no call to suffer for men, except the importunate call of His own everlasting love, yet after He took our nature, and became the man Jesus Christ—He actually stood Himself within the righteous liability of suffering, not indeed on account of any flaw in His spotless holiness, but as a participator of that flesh which lay under the sentence of sorrow and death, and being now engulfed in the horrible pit along with all the others, He could only deliver them, by being first delivered Himself, and thus opening a passage for them to follow him by; as a man who casts himself into an enclosed dungeon which has no outlet, in order to save a number of others whom he sees immured there, and, when he is in, forces a passage through the wall, by dashing himself against it, to the great injury of his person. His coming into the dungeon is a voluntary act, but after he is there, he is liable to the discomforts of the dungeon by necessity, until he breaks through. This is one man suffering for others, but it is not substitution."—P. 263.

No. III.—Page 177.

Extracts from "The Doctrine of Election," etc.

"My object in this treatise is to set forth, as distinctly and simply as I can, the grounds on which I have come to the conclusion, that the doctrine of God's Election, as taught

in the Bible, is altogether different from, and opposed to that which has passed under the name of the Doctrine of Election, and been received as such, by a great part of the professing church through many ages."—P. 1.

"I held this doctrine for many years, modified, however inconsistently, by the belief of God's love to all, and of Christ having died for all—and yet, when I look back on the state of my mind during that period, I feel that it would be truer to say, I submitted to it, than that I believed it. I submitted to it, because I did not see how the language of the 9th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and of a few similar passages, could bear any other interpretation; and yet I could not help feeling that, on account of what appeared to be the meaning of these few difficult passages, I was giving up the plain and obvious meaning of all the rest of the Bible, which seems continually, in the most unequivocal language, and in every page, to say to every man, 'See, I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil, therefore choose life that thou mayest live.' I could not help feeling, that if the above representation were true, then that on which a real and righteous responsibility in man can alone be founded, was wanting, and the slothful servant had reason when, in vindication of his unprofitableness, he said, 'I knew thee, that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed.' Above all, I could not help feeling that if God were such as that doctrine described Him, then the Creator of every man was not the friend of every man, nor the righteous object of confidence to every man; and that when Christ was preached to sinners, the whole truth of God was not preached to them, for that there was something behind Christ in the mind of God, giving Him to one, and withholding Him from another, so that the ministry of reconciliation was only an appendix to a deeper

and more dominant ministry, in which God appeared simply as a Sovereign without any moral attribute, and man was dealt with as a mere creature of necessity without any real responsibility."—Pp. 3-5.

"Thus, besides his own individual personality, we see two powers in every man—the one, the power of this world and of its prince; and the other the power of the world to come, and of its Prince. These are the flesh and the spirit, the seeds or principles of the first and second vessels. The man is not either the flesh or the spirit, he is separate from both, but they are seeds sown in him, and his capacity of acting is merely his capacity of choosing to which of these two active principles he will yield himself up. They are, as it were, two cords attached to every heart, the one held by the hand of Satan, the other held by the hand of God. And they are continually drawing the heart in opposite directions, the one towards the things of self, the other towards the things of God—the one being the reprobation, and the other the election. Thus man, in all his actings, never has to originate anything; he has only to follow something already commenced within him; he has only to choose to which of these two powers he will join himself. Here, then, I found that which I had approved in Calvinism, and which I required as an element of every explanation of the doctrine which should be set up in opposition to Calvinism, namely, a recognition that there is no self-quickening power in man, and that there is no good in man but what is of the direct acting of the Spirit of God."—Pp. 58-9.

"When we see the two natures, of flesh and spirit, so in every man that he may join himself to either of them, and thus become either reprobate or elect, we see the root of the doctrine of election. And when we see rightly the gift of Christ, we shall see that as He is the true light which

lighteth every man, so also there is in Him a communication of life to every man. For 'in him was life, and the life was the light of men;' and thus the light which lighteth every man is a living light—a light whereby he may live. And thus by the entrance of the Word into our flesh, not only has God been brought near to us, as an object of trust and love, but also His living Spirit, the divine nature, has been communicated to us subjectively as a capacity of embracing God, whether we exercise it or not. . . . . The whole responsibility of man consists in his power to recognise and follow this inward drawing of God, or to reject it, according to his own personal choosing." —P. 61.

"Let me not be misunderstood, as if I said either that man can, in his own strength, turn to God, or of his own origination would ever desire to do so,—but man, since the gift of Christ, need not do anything in his own strength. The strength of God is communicated to him, in the seed of the word sown in his heart, so that he may take hold of it, and walk with God; and it is only by his own wilful refusal to use that strength that he is without it. Conversion is, indeed, man's first step in the spiritual life, but he never could have taken this step, nor could he ever rightly have been commanded to take it, unless God had first taken a step towards him. The Word who was with God, and was God, and in whom there is life, hath come into man's nature,—into the whole mass of the nature,—as a fountain of life, to quicken every man, and as a living cord, to draw man up to God. And shall we now speak and reason about man, as if he were yet in the condition into which Adam's fall brought him, before the Word was given; though now in him, 'God is the Saviour of all men, specially of those who believe,' and in Him also 'the grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared,' and 'where

sin abounded, there hath grace much more abounded'? Most assuredly there is in Jesus Christ a *general* salvation for the whole race, inasmuch as in Him they are lifted again into that state of probation from which in Adam they had fallen, and are provided with spiritual strength to go through their probation, whether they use that strength or not: but none becomes *personally* a partaker of salvation, except by personally turning to God. And, in like manner, there is in Jesus Christ a general election for the whole race—inasmuch as, in Him, they are lifted out of that state of reprobation into which, in Adam, they had fallen; but no one becomes personally elect except by his personally receiving Christ into his heart." —Pp. 141-3.

"With regard to the importance of the outward Word, I may have exposed myself to misapprehension, especially where I have asserted the unprofitableness of the outward Word to those persons who were not listening to the inward word. But the reader will understand me, if he carries along with him, that by this expression I mean to describe persons contenting themselves, and pacifying their consciences, either with the formal reading of the Bible, or with the mere understanding of its theology, but without seeking or finding spiritual communion with God in it. Whilst they continue thus to read it or study it, no one surely who knows what religion is, would consider it profitable to them. Yet even in their case, I could not wish that they should give up the reading of the Bible. They are at present without faith, but the Bible has an intrinsic aptitude to produce faith. It contains, in the largeness of its inspiration, a tally corresponding to everything in the hearts of all men, and a key to every variety of their outward circumstances; and God is continually preparing a way for it into their consciences, by the events

with which He is meeting them in His providence, making them, through the discipline of these events, feel the truth of what it testifies of the wickedness and desolateness of the heart which is away from God, as well as the suitableness of its counsels and threatenings and consolations, to their experience and condition. And as the Spirit of God is ever bearing the same witness within them, although it may be generally disregarded, the coincidence of these two solemn voices, from within and from without, will sometimes strike like a knell upon them, and bring home to them the feeling that the Searcher of hearts is dealing with them, and that they are entangled in his net, and that there can be no true deliverance for them, and no true abiding rest for them, but in knowing Him, and in being of one mind with Him. It is in the hope of such a result as this, that I feel thankful to know that even those who are without faith are reading the Bible; for those who are in the practice of reading it are more in the way of this operation than those who read it not.

"And for this same reason, it appears desirable that there should be books, proving the inspiration and authority of the Bible, by all sorts of argument, notwithstanding the danger there is of men mistaking their assent to a demonstration for that faith which saves the soul; because a man who is really convinced that the Bible is a supernatural book, is more likely to seek God in it, than one who regards it as of at least doubtful origin."—Pp. 157-9.

"'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'[1] Compare this with the 7th verse: 'If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' From the comparison of these passages

[1] 1 John i. 9.

it may be inferred that the confession of sin means the same thing as the receiving of reproof, or the accepting of punishment, and that this is the blood of Jesus Christ, or the shedding of the blood of man's will in the Spirit of Jesus. For surely it is not to be supposed that two different ways of being cleansed from sin are set before us in these two verses of John, but that the *one only way* is set forth in both, under two different forms of expression.

"All sin consists in man's independent will; and therefore the shedding out of the blood of man's will is that which cleanseth from all sin. And as the true confession of sin is the condemnation which a man passes on his past life and doings considered as a ground of confidence, so it is an accepting of death as his due, which is the virtual shedding out of the blood of all his past life, and a casting of himself, in the Spirit of Jesus, on God and on His mercy, which endureth for ever, as the only life and hope of life.

"This was the continual sacrifice of Jesus, who bore and confessed the sins of all men. And He is the unspeakable gift of God to all men, not in order that they may be excused from making this sacrifice, but in order that they may partake of the Spirit of Jesus, and thus may be enabled to partake with Him in this sacrifice of self—in this acceptable service—so that God may be just, whilst reckoning them righteous."—Pp. 240-2.

"And now if any of my readers are disposed to stop here and ask me, 'Do you in your conscience think that this dealing of God towards man, in allowing an innumerable race to suffer by the act of a single individual, is consistent with goodness and righteousness?' I feel quite free to meet the question,—and I answer unhesitatingly, that I cannot think it good or righteous that any one should suffer, *on the whole,* or taking the whole of his existence

into the account, by the fault of another—and that my confidence in the goodness and righteousness of God in this dealing of His towards man, is founded on the conviction that out of it a greater amount and a higher kind of blessedness will arise than could have been produced without it—and that eventually no one individual will fail to participate in that greater good, except by his own determined rejection of it.

"I might have just cause to complain, if exposed to trials, without an adequate provision of strength to meet them; or exposed to sufferings, without a prospect of deriving good from them. And the justice of my complaint would not be at all affected by the circumstance of this condition coming to me by inheritance, in consequence of the sin of another, whether that other was my progenitor or not. I cannot admit the justice of a demand which He who makes it knows I cannot meet, and of sufferings being laid upon me which He knows cannot produce any good to me. And I feel that my complaint is equally well founded, whether this condition comes to me by original creation or by inheritance. Indeed, I do not feel that the way of its coming to me makes any difference on the justice of the dealing, so long as it does not come in consequence of a culpable act of my own.

"But again, I do not feel that I have any right to complain of being called to any exertions or sufferings, however great and however irksome they may be, if the appointer of my lot supplies me with strength to meet them, and if I have a prospect of deriving good from them, in proportion to their difficulty. I should have no right to complain of being originally created in such a condition of things, and the circumstance of its coming to me by inheritance from a progenitor on whom it was denounced as a mark of God's disapprobation of his disobedience, does not change the

case, so as to give me a right to complain as if such a condition of things were unrighteous.

"If, according to the nature of things, a created mind can only rise to spiritual excellence and blessedness by passing through a spiritual and moral conflict, which embraces sufferings and self-denial—and if there be a proportion between the amount of excellence and blessedness obtained on the one hand, and the difficulties met and overcome on the other,—then it will follow, that God is indeed only calling us to a higher holiness and blessedness, by placing us under such a condition of things as we now find ourselves under, in consequence of the fall; and although that condition may have come to us as marking God's displeasure against the sin of our progenitor, it will not on that account alter its own character in relation to us, or cease to be a reason for gratitude to God for His goodness in giving us this higher call.

"As to the idea of one man being considered actually culpable on account of what another man has done amiss, it appears to me as opposite to the whole tenor of the Bible as it is to our own consciences. Yet I feel that an instruction is conveyed to me in the fact that the perversion of my nature, and consequent liability to pain and death, come to me by inheritance from a man who had brought them upon himself and his descendants by his personal transgression, which I could not have had, if I had been created originally in that condition, without any such apparent cause leading to it. So that if it were said to me, 'It is the plan of God to put you into this state of trial and suffering, but you may choose whether you will have it so settled by original appointment, or whether you will have it come as the consequence of the sin of a progenitor,' I feel a reason for choosing the latter. With regard to myself, they are equally dealings of sovereignty,

irrespective of deservings; but according to the first way, I have only the wise appointment of the circumstances of my probation, whilst in the other I have an additional speaking testimony from God, warning me of the poisonous nature of sin by the example of my progenitor.

"In like manner, the fact that I am invited to receive, through another One, the favour of God and the gift of the Spirit, as a reward for his having resisted and overcome all sin, notwithstanding of his having been encumbered with all the disadvantages arising from Adam's fall, contains an instruction which I could not have had if these blessings had been bestowed upon me in unexplained sovereignty.

"I am instructed by these two facts to consider spiritual darkening and weakening as the consequence of voluntary alienation from God, and spiritual enlightening and strengthening as the consequence of a voluntary surrender of self to God; for I can never in my conscience suppose that I shall suffer a true and permanent evil from the acts of the first Adam, except by yielding myself to that spirit of self-pleasing which brought on his penalty, or that I shall derive a real benefit from the acts of the Second Adam, except by yielding myself to that spirit of self-sacrifice which brought on his reward.

"Thus, if the condition in which Adam was placed after the fall was one in which he was called to greater exertions and sufferings than in his former state; and at the same time, if his supply of strength was proportionally increased, so that by using that strength faithfully in meeting his trials, he had the certainty of obtaining a much higher place, both in holiness and happiness, than he could otherwise have reached,—then we may say that Adam was a gainer by his punishment, and that his posterity, notwithstanding of what they suffer through him, have a higher hope set before them than they would have

had if they had stood with him, in the original condition in which he was created.

"But it will be answered that, although the truth of all this be granted, still it must be taken into account, that whilst men have a higher hope set before them, on this new footing, they have also a greater risk as well as a more arduous task, and that therefore they are tempted to wish that they had an easier part to act, and less responsibility, though at the expense of having a lower hope before them.

"They may be *tempted* to wish this, but they cannot in their consciences deny that such a temptation proceeds from an evil source—from a base, low-minded slothfulness, indifferent and careless about the gracious purpose of God to lead us upwards to Himself; and, at all events, they cannot charge their Maker with unrighteousness in calling them to a good and righteous conflict against evil, whilst He does not fail to provide them with strength adequate to their needs. They might as well complain that they are not in the condition of a wild horse in the plains of Tartary, or of an eagle amongst the Andes—set free from all responsibility. Nay, they might as well complain that they have a God at all over them, and that they are not their own gods."—Pp. 257-64.

"I believe that the original condition of man, the fall, and the redemption, are only so many consecutive distinct steps in that mighty plan which is now in progress, and which may continue to be so for ever, by which God would train up a creature for real participation in His own holy and blessed nature. I cannot conceive that a creature such as man will be when that purpose is accomplished, could have been made *at once*, in other words, that such a production is within the province of creative power. I believe that holiness is an acquirement which can only be made by

the co-operation of the creature's own personal will; it is a habit, and not a mere capacity, and thus belongs not to the first creation, but to the second, which requires the consent of the creature."—P. 272.

"Thus every man has, in his present state of trial, three distinct wills within him, of which he is himself conscious,—first, the will of God striving with his conscience; second, the will of Satan or self ruling in his members; and third, the elective will, in his own personality, which determines with which of the other two wills he shall side. This last will, though it has this peculiar prerogative, is yet never itself the dominant will, it only chooses which of the other two shall be dominant."—P. 281.

"The conscience which God has given to every man is a much higher gift than either an outward or an inward oracle, such as we have been supposing. It is a capacity of entering into the reasons of God's actions and commandments, it is a capacity of a true spiritual union with Him; and thus when we meet the will of God in our consciences, we receive it in the way of participation, or as an infusion, so to speak,—whereas, when we meet it in an oracle simply, we receive it as an impulsion. That which does not enter by the conscience, but is merely put upon us, or conferred on us, can never really affect our nature,—it may elevate us as instruments in the hands of God, but it cannot elevate us into fellowship with God. And therefore the smallest conscious and sympathetic conformity to the will of God is a much higher thing than the being made the instrument of raising the dead, or declaring things to come. In the one case the nature is really elevated; in the other, it is only used for an elevated purpose."—Pp. 513-14.

"The Protestant does the same thing with regard to the doctrines of religion that the Papist does with regard to

religion throughout. He relieves himself from the personal obligation of apprehending their truth in the light of his own conscience; he looks to the Bible as the Papist looks to the Church, and he adopts whatever doctrines he thinks that he finds there, without feeling the obligation of personally seeing their truth in the light of his own conscience, before he is really entitled to call himself a believer of them. He thus substitutes outward authority in the place of the light which is Life, although he condemns the Papist for doing that very thing."—Pp. 515-16.

"But when I say that we are not left to lean on any outward authority for our knowledge of God, and of His ways towards us, let no one think that I am putting aside the Bible as an authority; for my meaning is simply this, that although many most important truths are set before us in the Bible, which never would have entered our hearts had they not been thus set before us; yet that being thus set before us, they are then only profitable to us, and even truly believed by us, when they awaken within us a corresponding form of our inward spiritual consciousness, so that we recognise them henceforth, as truths which we ourselves know to be truths, by conscious experience, and not merely on the outward authority of the Book.

"There are many facts in our intellectual experience quite analogous to this, which might be used to illustrate it. Thus, a man may be perfectly incapable of making any advance in mathematical science by his own original and unassisted efforts,—and yet if Euclid be put into his hands, he may find himself quite able to follow and appreciate the reasoning, and thus to gain a very considerable acquaintance with the subject. His mind in consequence is filled with a new class of ideas, which he has acquired entirely from the reading of this book. And yet it is not on the author-

ity of the book that he rests his conviction of the truth of any of the propositions contained in it, but on his own personal discernment of their truth. Indeed, we could not consider him to have entered in the slightest degree into their meaning, if we found him resting his belief of them on the authority of the book, or on any outward authority whatever. Nor indeed would we call such a belief a mathematical belief at all. And yet had not the book presented the truths outwardly to him, the inward intellectual types might have lain for ever dormant within him.

"In this case, we do not feel that we detract from the importance of the book, when we say that it is subordinate to the inward intellectual authority; that is, when we say that it is to be judged by that authority, and that no man can believe it rightly except by discerning its agreement with that authority within him; and that any other kind of belief is not a belief which suits the subject, because it is not a belief which discerns truth in the subject.

"And in the same way we do not detract from the importance or from the authority of the Bible, when we say that then only can its authority be rightly acknowledged by us, when we discern its agreement with the testimony of the spiritual witness within us, and that its great importance consists in awakening our consciousness to the presence and the instructions of that spiritual witness."—Pp. 523-26.

"Metaphysicians have disputed whether conscience is a simple faculty, or whether the impressions which we ascribe to it are produced by a combination of faculties. And if there be no higher nature in it than man's nature, it is of little consequence which of these opinions we adopt; because, on this hypothesis, our power of obeying its intimation, which is certainly the important point, could not be affected

by the correctness or incorrectness of our opinion. But if the voice in our conscience is the indication of the actual presence of God within us, a knowledge that it is so is of immense importance to us; for thus we enter into the secret of God's love towards us, and of His purpose concerning us, that our hearts should be His temples, and that we should be one with Him, through Jesus Christ; and thus also we discover, that though in ourselves we are only ignorance and weakness, yet we have within our reach, and within the limits of our own nature, the infinite wisdom and infinite strength of God, to which we may unite ourselves, and we are thus encouraged to run with confidence the race that is set before us.

"Some of my readers may think that I have given too great a place throughout the whole book to the subject of conscience; but in this I have acted from the conviction that neither the doctrine of Election, nor any other doctrine, can be rightly understood except through the doctrine of conscience."—Pp. 544-46.

No. IV.—Page 373.

MR. ALEXANDER J. SCOTT.

In 1830 Mr. Scott became minister of the small Scotch congregation at Woolwich. Here, in comparative retirement, immersed in studies of many kinds, he remained for upwards of fifteen years. His connection with Edward Irving at the first, and his residence so near the metropolis afterwards, brought him into close fellow-

ship with Carlyle, Maurice, Hare, Dunn, etc., disclosing to them at once the rich resources of his scholarship and the peculiarities of a spiritual intelligence, the depth and width and height of which seemed equally above the ordinary range.

In 1841 Mr. Scott delivered in London a course of five lectures on "The Social Systems of the Present Day compared with Christianity." These lectures were reported in the *Pulpit*. They dealt with Romanism in the shape it then took of Puseyism, and which now, after an interval of thirty-six years, has reappeared in the guise of Ritualism; with Chartism in the shape it then took of demand for universal suffrage, annual Parliaments, and vote by ballot, and which now by kindly treatment and wise concession has almost disappeared; with Socialism in the shape it then took of Owenism, and which now, instead of disappearing, or being seen only among the lower and the more unenlightened, has in the portentous shapes of Materialism, Secularism, Comtism, spread widely and taken hold of all classes of the community. The reader of Mr. Scott's lectures, as he reflects that more than the years of a generation have passed since their delivery, will be surprised that there is so little in them that is not as directly applicable to the present as to the past. They owe this to a quality by which all his handlings of such topics were distinguished,—that the merely temporary, secondary, adventitious was set aside, and in each case the root-principle was sought for, grasped, and alone dealt with. In the following year (1842) another but shorter course of lectures was delivered in the same place on "Schism," the same method observed, and with a like result. Three years later (1845) Mr. Scott preached a very original and remarkable sermon at Woolwich, on "The

First Principles of Church Government." Its object was to show that, as represented in Holy Writ, this principle consists in the free exercise, on the part of the Church, at all different times, and in all different circumstances, of her own best judgment in the selection of the means best fitted to promote the great ends of her institution; that she has not been bound down to any specific form of government or worship or discipline by a divine enactment in its favour; that her institutions stand not on the strength of statute, but in that of their fitness to fulfil the great objects of her mission; that in point of fact the history of their origin proves this to be their character. The discourse consists mainly in a review of the first institution of Judges under Moses, of the Schools of the Prophets and of the Synagogue in Old Testament times, and of the appointment of Deacons and the decisions of the first Council at Jerusalem in New Testament times, with the design of showing that what was in each case done, sprang naturally and primarily out of the form and pressure of existing circumstances, did not originate in a divine edict, and though the sanction and blessing of God were conferred and bestowed, human wisdom, seeking such guidance as is always promised, was permitted to prompt and to fashion. The sermon was published as a pamphlet and came into the hands of Dr. Chalmers, who wrote thus to its author:—

"EDINBURGH, *March* 22, 1845.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Yours is no every-day pamphlet; and I have read it with the most entire and cordial satisfaction. . . . How the adoption of your principle ought to speed the cause of Christian union! . . .

"The saying of Paul that 'I speak as a man,' while it does not affect the plenary inspiration of Scripture, which

is responsible not for the thing recorded but for the truth of it, teaches, in my opinion, your very lesson, by letting posterity know, from even his high example, that it was competent on mere human discretion to decide on questions of ecclesiastical regulations and polity. There is thus a great purpose served by that brief intimation, and it is a further enhancement of the lesson when he says, 'I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say.'—I am, my dear Sir, yours very truly, THOMAS CHALMERS."

In November 1848 Mr. Scott was appointed to the Chair of "English Language and Literature" in University College, London. In the year following (1849), on the invitation of the Directors of the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh, he delivered in that city six lectures on "The Philosophy of History." In the winter of 1850-51 he was called to occupy the position of Principal of the new College (Owens) then founded at Manchester. In addition to the Principalship, he filled the Chairs of "Moral and Mental Philosophy" and of "English Language and Literature." Again and again the Directors of the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh sought and obtained his highly prized services as a lecturer. In 1850 he delivered before its members four lectures on "The existing Elements of English Society historically considered;" in 1851, four lectures on "The Progress of Mental Philosophy," and four lectures on "The General Literature of the Period." In 1853 he was asked by the Directors, as the greatest honour they could bestow, to deliver the Introductory Address to the course. In 1856 he delivered four lectures on "The Literature of the Middle Ages;" in 1858-59 four lectures on "The Revival of Letters anterior to the Reformation;" and in 1860 four lectures

on "The Reformation in its Philosophical and Social Tendencies, and the Result."

The Principalship of Owens College Mr. Scott after some years resigned; but the Chairs held originally in connection with it he occupied till his death, which took place in January 1866, at Veytaux, on the Lake of Geneva, to which place failing health had taken him at the close of the summer session at Manchester in 1865.

As a linguist Mr. Scott had at free command, and turned to frequent exercise, the three old tongues of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. His mastery of the three modern ones, French, Italian, and German, was complete. With the Anglo-Saxon he was so versant as to undertake to teach it. It was as instruments, however, that he used these languages, employing them as the needed keys to open up to him mediæval and modern literature and philosophy. The rich and varied stores thus gathered in were used again but as instruments or materials for that spiritual faculty of insight and reflection which in originality, subtlety, depth, and comprehensiveness was scarce surpassed by any pure thinker of his times. It is ever to be regretted that he has left so little behind him. This was largely due to his possession of a singular facility of extempore address, and as singular an indisposition either to write or to publish. No matter what his topic,—whether recondite, involving sustained trains of purely abstract thought; or historical, involving numerous references to persons and events; or critical, involving the introduction of many apt illustrations,—in lecturing he never used a manuscript, seldom indeed had committed his thoughts to writing, and yet the stream of words flowed on unbroken,—words apparently all chosen with the nicest care and most delicate adaptation. "I have never," wrote Dr. W. B.

Carpenter, "heard any public speaker who could be compared with him in masterly arrangement of materials, lucid method of exposition, ready choice of the most apposite language, freedom from all redundancy, force and vigour of expression, beauty and aptness of illustration,—in a word, in all those qualities which fix the attention of hearers." Could Mr. Scott have submitted to the labour of writing and publishing the thirty-one Edinburgh lectures alone, accompanied by illustrative notes, what a wide field would they cover, what a vast range of reading would they indicate, what profound remarks and delicate criticisms would they have presented to us! As it is, we have only notes of the four on the Literature of the Middle Ages, taken down by a shorthand writer, and published at Mr. Erskine's instance and expense. Urged by many friends, a year or two before his death, Mr. Scott put together and had printed three early papers from his pen, the lectures on Social System and Schism, and the sermon on Church Government. These, published by Macmillan and Co. after his decease, under the title "Discourses by Alexander J. Scott," are all the fruits that now remain of all the searchings after truth of a spirit so finely touched that the two friends who knew him best, and who had each large acquaintance with distinguished men, have separately declared that he was the man above all others they had ever met who impressed them with the sense of mental and spiritual superiority.

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WRITINGS OF MR. ERSKINE.

Ten years or so after the publication of the "Doctrine of Election," two distinguished Americans called upon Mr. Erskine, giving as their apology for intruding without introduction, their strong desire to become personally acquainted with an author whose writings had made a wide and deep impression on their countrymen. "It is strange," said Mr. Erskine; "it is a long time since I have read any of them, and my impression is that if I did, I would dislike them." His interviewers named one of his volumes as to which they fancied he could have no such feeling. "My impression is," was the reply, "that that is the one that I would particularly dislike." Cherishing for a time this feeling, Mr. Erskine suffered his earlier publications to go out of print. In 1844, Mr. Wright Mathews having written to him suggesting that the "Introductory Essay" to the little volume of "Letters by a Lady" should be reprinted, and offering, if the liberty were given to republish it, to superintend the press, received the following reply:—

"St. George's Hotel, 26*th Sept.* 1844.

"I don't wish to oppose your desire to have that little Essay reprinted, and yet I know that I could not put my seal to it as I could have done when it was written, and I do not like to put anything forth as the Gospel, which contains so imperfect a view of truth as that little essay does. You could make a much better tract than that, and if so, why publish an inferior and defective tract?

"I hope yet, if God spare me, to write some short state

ment which may contain all the truth which I have published, and omit the trash. Let this be my answer, dear friends, to your proposition."

Discouragement only led Mr. Mathews to renew and enlarge his offer, and he got in return a *carte-blanche*, upon which he never acted :—

"PARIS, *8th October* 1844.

"YOU are very welcome to do what you please with my books, only don't touch much on the last, which I hope yet to put into a better form, and perhaps to make it into a *résumé* of all that is valuable in the former ones, particularly the conclusion. In the introduction to the old lady's letters I remember some severe words about the leprosy of the Church of Scotland, which ought to be omitted as hurting without healing. It is long since I have read any of them. I cannot do it, there are so many things which are stated there as whole truths, which are only half truths. This is my general fault to them."

Under the title "True and False Religion," the "Introductory Essay" alluded to in the first of these letters, was re-issued in 1874, by the incumbent of Glenfield, Leicestershire, and it is gratifying to observe that the passage pointed to by Mr. Erskine as the one he would not like to see reprinted has been, of his own motion, omitted by the judicious editor.

The conclusion of the volume on Election, referred to in the second letter to Mr. Mathews, was also separately republished, by one who thoroughly appreciated its place and importance among Mr. Erskine's writings, under the title, "The Internal Word; or, Light becoming Life; a Short Guide to the Rule of Faith and of Life; being an Abridgment of the concluding portion of Mr. Erskine's

volume on the Doctrine of Election. Edited by the Right Rev. the Bishop of Argyll. Edinburgh, 1865."

The indisposition to authorship cherished so long was at last dispelled. The publication successively of the "Essays and Reviews," Renan's "Life of Jesus," "Ecce Homo," and Colenso on the "Pentateuch," awakened in him profound anxiety and not a little alarm. It was not in the direction taken by the writers of those volumes that he felt inclined to move. It was not from movement in that direction that he anticipated the truest and best advance. Apostle of progress in religious thought as he had proved himself to be, depth was to him far more than width. It was a broadening which should do nothing to weaken or dilute the faith that he aimed at and desired. There was much in the fresh historic criticism brought to bear upon the narrative of the Bible with which he was inclined to sympathise, but whenever he detected a disposition to set aside or make light of the great truths of the Incarnation of the Deity in the person of Jesus Christ, and the new relation of sonship to God into which the world has been begotten by His life and death, he drew back and repudiated. When the great truths or laws revealed in the central facts of Christianity were in any way unsettled, it was not, in Mr. Erskine's opinion, by Biblical criticism that the unsettling process was best met, but by a fresh or still further unfolding of their grounds and reasons in the character of God and the constitution of human nature. In this region he felt that he had a word to say of moment to the times; he set himself to say it too in such a manner as might address itself pertinently and with power even to those who entirely repudiated the inspiration and the supernatural in the facts and records of the Bible. The letters from 1864 onwards tell with what difficulties he had to contend in trying to give fit expres-

sion to his latest thoughts. And they sufficiently indicate what these thoughts were which he had yet but imperfectly embodied when he was removed by death. His dying charge to Miss Gourlay was most faithfully and intelligently executed. All that was in a fit state for publication was carefully seen through the press, and published in 1871 under the title, "The Spiritual Order and other Papers, selected from the Manuscripts of the late Thomas Erskine of Linlathen," whilst the specific instruction as to the paper on Education and Probation was carried out by its separate publication in 1870 under the title, "The Purpose of God."[1]

With the removal of the indisposition to prepare anything new for publication, there came also the removal of the impression that his earlier writings were in anything like dissonance with his later ideas. Yielding to repeated solicitation, he consented to listen to his volume on the "Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel," as read to him by friends, and being satisfied that it was in substantial harmony with what he was then preparing for the press, consented to its republication. It appeared in 1870, soon after his death, and a new edition was issued in 1873.

WRITINGS OF MR. ERSKINE, WITH DATES OF PUBLICATION.

1. *Remarks on the Internal Evidence for the Truth of Revealed Religion.*

   Edinburgh, Waugh and Innes, 1820.
   Fourth Edition, 1821.
   Ninth Edition, 1829.

   Translated into French by the Duchess de Broglie, and pub-

[1] It appears as the third chapter of *The Spiritual Order.*

lished in Paris, 1822, under the title "Réflexions sur l'Évidence Intrinsèque de la Vérité du Christianisme."

Translated into German, and published at Leipzig, 1825, under the title "Bemerkungen über die Inneren Gründe der Wahrheit der Geoffenbarten Religion."

2. *An Essay on Faith.*

Edinburgh, Waugh and Innes, 1822.
Fifth Edition, 1829.

Translated into French, 1826, and published at Paris under the title "Essai sur La Foi."

3. *The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel.*

Edinburgh, Waugh and Innes, 1828.
Fourth Edition, 1831.
Fifth Edition, 1870.
New Edition, 1873.

Translated into French under the title "La Pleine Gratuité du Pardon," and published at Lausanne, 1874.

4. *The Brazen Serpent, or Life coming through Death.*

Edinburgh, 1831.
London, Whittaker, 1846.

5. *The Doctrine of Election, and its connection with the General Theory of Christianity, illustrated from many parts of Scripture, and especially from the Epistle to the Romans.*

London, James Duncan, 1837.

6. *The Gifts of the Holy Spirit.*

Greenock, R. B. Lusk, 1830.

7. *Introductory Essay to Extracts of Letters to a Christian Friend.*

Greenock, R. B. Lusk, 1830.

8. *Introductory Essay to the Works of the Rev. John Gambold, A.M.*

Collins' Select Christian Authors; Glasgow, 1822.

9. *Introductory Essay to the Saints' Everlasting Rest.*
Collins' Select Christian Authors; Glasgow, 1824.

10. *Introductory Essay to the Letters of Samuel Rutherford.*
Collins' Select Christian Authors; Glasgow, 1825.

11. *The Spiritual Order, and other Papers.*
Published after his death, in 1871.

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